

The Church in Shetland
During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.

By

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Foreword.

The subject of this thesis was first suggested to the writer by the late Dr W.P.Paterson, who was deeply interested in the Church in Shetland, and anxious that some attempt should be made to preserve an account of her history.

This thesis attempts to deal with the period embracing the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a period beginning with the pre-Reformation Church, and ending with the final establishment of a Presbyterian form of church government.

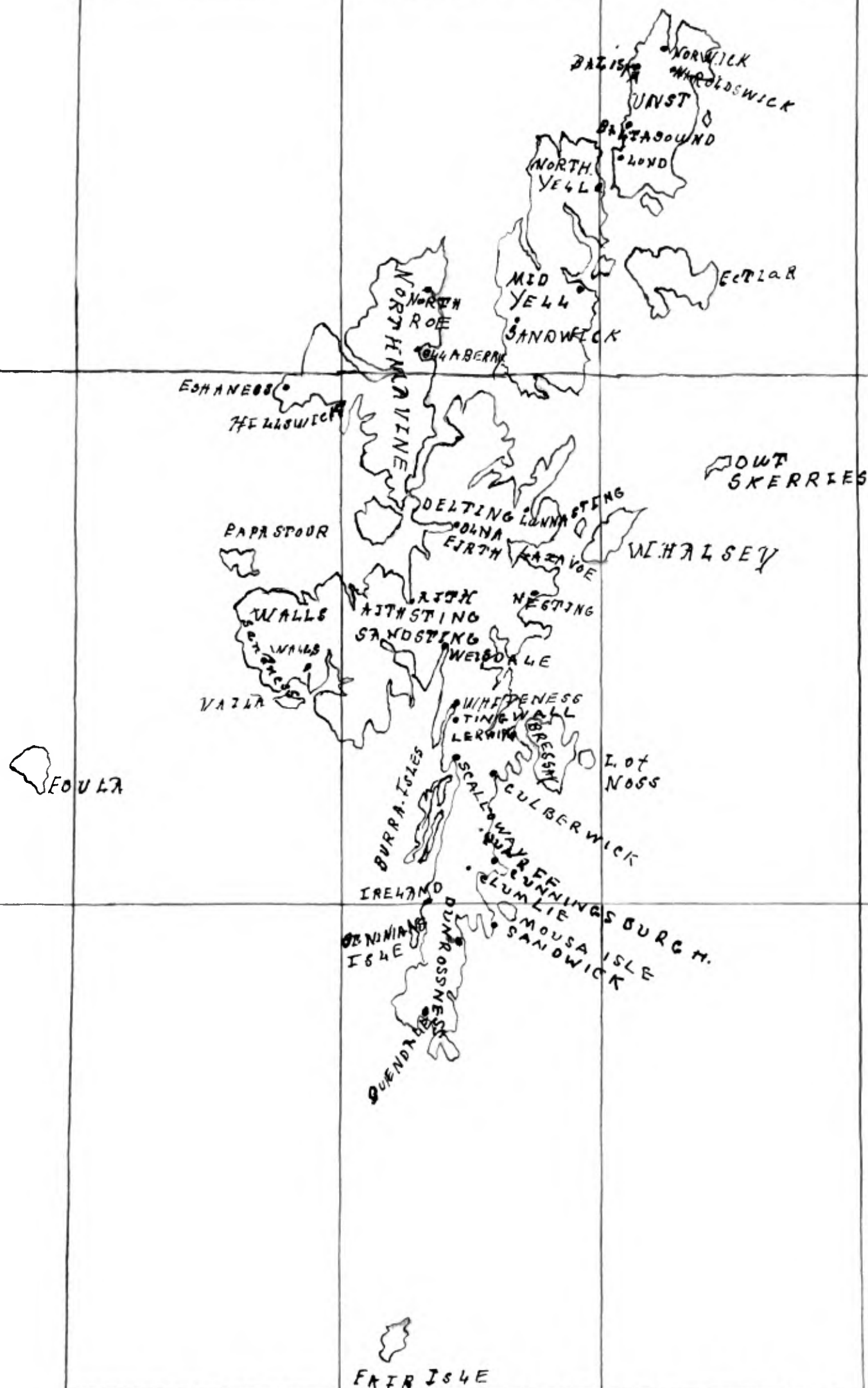
The difficulty was to find the material for such a work. The writer was a minister in Shetland for seven years, and for five years was Clerk of the Presbytery, and during that time was unable to discover a single Synod, Presbytery, or Kirk-Session record belonging to this period. The earliest Presbytery record is dated 1830, and there are no Kirk-Session records till the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The records of the Church in Orkney have fared no better as far as this period is concerned, for according to the Reports on the Records of the Church of Scotland given in to the General Assembly in 1889 the Synod minute book does not begin till 1853, and the earliest Presbytery record is dated 1701. Even the Presbytery records of Orkney available to Dr Hew Scott in 1870 (vide Hew Scott: *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* Vol. III. Part 1. p.373.) have disappeared.

While compelled to rely to a considerable extent on the data given in the old and new editions of the *Fasti*, the writer, wherever possible, has gone to primary sources for his facts,

and in addition, has been fortunate enough in the course of his research, to discover some old church papers in the Library of the Church of Scotland, which give a considerable amount of firsthand information of the affairs of the Church in Shetland at the close of the seventeenth century.

With these and other data he has been able to collect from every available source, he has endeavoured to give, as far as possible, a continuous and consistent account of the Church in Shetland in general, and of the parishes in particular, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and to show her relationship to the Church in Scotland during that period.



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Introduction.

Chapter 1.

The Shetland Islands are the most northerly of the British Isles, and lie on the parallel of latitude that runs through Bergen in Norway and Cape Farewell in Greenland, but the climate is much milder than might be expected, owing to the proximity of the Gulf Stream. Shetland consists of an archipelago of one hundred islands of which about twenty-three are inhabited. The largest island, the Mainland, is fifty-four miles from north to south, and twenty-one miles, at its widest, from east to west. The scenery is wild and rugged, and has a beauty of its own, but the land has a lean and barren appearance, and this is accentuated by the absence of trees. There are fertile spots here and there, like that of the Tingwall Valley, but the soil for the most part offers little encouragement to the crofter. The Shetlander, therefore, has to look to the sea for the most of his living, and either enters the mercantile marine service, or goes to the fishing, while his family looks after the croft in his absence. The Shetland women also help to keep the home going by the proceeds of their knitting. Shetland is famous for its hosiery, and this home industry brings in annually some £80,000.

The history of Shetland from the time it was pawned to the Scottish Crown by King Christian I of Norway in 1468, down to the Crofters' Commission in 1889 is, for the most part, a record of oppression and victimisation by which the people were practically reduced to a state of serfdom. Little is known, however, of these islands before the coming to Shetland of Earl Robert Stewart. Prior

to this the glimpses we get are rare and fleeting.

The earliest reference to Shetland is to be found in the Agricola of Tacitus, where it is stated that the Roman fleet in its circumnavigation of the northern portion of Great Britain after the battle of Mons Graupius (A.D. 84) discovered and subdued the Orkneys and that in the course of this expedition Thule was seen (dispecta^a est et Thule), and there is every reason to believe that by Thule was meant the island of Foula. After that there is nothing but the vaguest references to Shetland till we come to the ninth century.

Archeological discoveries in the islands have proved beyond doubt that the early inhabitants of Shetland, if not the earliest, were the Picts, who probably came from the northern part of the mainland of Scotland. Scattered throughout the islands are to be found the remains of seventy-five Pictish brochs or fortresses, the most perfectly preserved one being that of the island of Mousa. There is also the famous Ogham stone found in the island of Bressay, and other Ogham stones and ecclesiastical relics, not so well known, which bear silent testimony to the fact that Christianity had reached this land in the pre-Norse period. How far the Picts in Shetland were christianised it is impossible to say, nor is there any definite knowledge of the way in which the Gospel first came to these northern isles. Such place-names as Papa Stour, Papil, are evidence of the Irish missionaries or Papae (priests) having settled and worked in these districts. The name of St Ninian also

a. Tacitus, Agricola, Chapter X.

crossed over to Shetland, where St Ringan's Isle preserves his memory to this day. It is also probable that the disciples of St Columba found their way to Shetland from Orkney, and had a share in christianising the people.

In the ninth century many of the chiefs and principal men in Norway migrated to Shetland, Orkney and the Hebrides, to escape the burdens that were being imposed upon them by Harald Haarfagre, the founder of the kingdom of Norway.^a It is not likely that these Norsemen exterminated the Picts, as is sometimes asserted. They simply subjugated and absorbed them, and it is more reasonable to trace the un-Norse looking people in some of the secluded parts of the Islands back to the Picts rather than to Spaniards wrecked in the time of the Armada.^b Whatever Christianity there was in the Islands disappeared before this invasion of pagan Norsemen, and did not reappear until the close of the tenth century.

In order to put a stop to the raids on his coasts by the Norsemen who had settled in Shetland and elsewhere, Harald Haarfagre in 874 A.D. collected a great fleet and subdued the Shetlands, the Orkneys, the Hebrides and the Isle of Man. Shetland and Orkney were annexed to Norway, and Sigurd the brother of Rognvald, Earl of Moere, became the first ruler of the new provinces.^c

The rule of the Norse earls was unbroken until 1231 A.D.

a. Wilson: History of the Church and State in Norway pp 12 & 18.

b. Jakobson: Shetland Dialect and Place Names pp 1-4.

c. Gjerset: History of the Norwegian People. p. 130.

In that year the last of the Norwegian earls, Jarl John, son of Jarl Harald Madaddson died, and the earldom passed successively into the hands of the Earls of the Angus, Stratherne and St Clair lines. They recognised the sovereignty both of Norway and Scotland, while the lordship of Shetland was resumed by the Norwegian Crown and its affairs administered directly by governors or fouds appointed by and responsible to the Scandinavian monarch.

Olaf Tryggvison king of Norway, who had been busy converting his people to Christianity, turned his attention about the year 1000 A.D. to his subjects in Orkney and Shetland, and by a stratagem forced the Jarl Sigurd Lodvesson to accept Christianity for himself and for the people of his earldom. Soon after, the Church was established there by the Norwegian ecclesiastical authorities, and the islands were divided into parishes. Priests were settled in these parishes, and churches were erected. The parochial system then inaugurated has, with little alteration, remained to this day, although almost everything else connected with that early Norse Church has perished. The restored Faith, however, made slow progress, and it was not till 1102 A.D. that the first bishop of Orkney and Shetland was appointed. He was known as William the Old, and ruled the diocese for sixty-six years. It was during this period also that the native system of law and justice, and of local government, founded on Norwegian models grew into a well established and carefully administered polity.^a

In 1468 A.D. first Orkney and then Shetland, was pawned to Scotland as a pledge for the unpaid dowry of Margaret daughter of a. Goudie: The Celtic and Scandinavian Antiquities of Shetland.
Introduction.

Christian I king of Norway. The transaction is a curious one, and shows how little monarchs studied the feelings and interests of their subjects in those days. The marriage of Margaret of Norway to James III of Scotland had been arranged to settle a long standing dispute over payments due to Norway, in connection with the Western Isles which had been ceded to Alexander III of Scotland. The king of Norway agreed to give a full discharge for the annual tribute in connection with the Western Isles, and also for the arrears. He further agreed to give as his daughter's dowry sixty thousand florins, ten thousand florins to be paid over before her departure from Copenhagen. The Orkney Islands were to be given as a pledge for the balance, but as he could raise only two thousand florins, he pledged Shetland as security for the other eight thousand.^a The islands thus temporarily pawned to Scotland, are now counties of Scotland, and any idea of their ever being returned to Norway has long been abandoned. Nevertheless for a considerable period Norway interested herself in Orkney and Shetland, and asserted her authority by making valid grants of kirk-lands from 1490 - 1500 A.D. and in 1485 A.D. its officer the Lawman of Bergen pronounced decrees affecting Shetland valid. We also find the Scottish Parliament expressly recognising the ancient laws in the islands as late as 1567 A.D. while as late as 1688 "the Plenipotentiaries of Europe assembled at Breda attested that the Right of Redemption was unprescribed and imprescribable"^b

a. Hume Brown, History of Scotland Vol II pp 261 - 262.

b. Balfour: Oppressions of Orkney and Shetland. p. XLV.

But whatever might be the views of Norway or those of the people of Shetland as to the temporary nature of the pledge, there is no sign that Scotland had any intention of ever giving back the islands, or expected them to be redeemed, and as a matter of fact both Orkney and Shetland were annexed to the Crown as early as February 1472 A.D. only four years after they had been given in pledge. In that same year the See of Orkney was placed under the Metropolitan Bishop of St Andrew's by a Bull of Pope Sixtus IV dated at the Vatican 17th August 1472 A.D.

Down to the end of the fifteenth century little change took place in the method of administration of affairs in Church and State. William Tulloch who had been bishop since 1455 A.D. remained in office till 1477 A.D. and the Norwegian Church still took a lively interest in ecclesiastical affairs in Orkney and Shetland. Andrew was the first bishop to be appointed under the jurisdiction of St Andrews. He became bishop in 1478 and ruled the diocese till 1501 A.D. The civil government was entrusted to viceroys appointed by the King of Scotland, and these for the most part ruled in accordance with the agreement made between Norway and Scotland that there should be no interference with the native laws.

As we enter the sixteenth century, however, we see signs of the beginning of a new policy on the part of the Scottish Crown and Church, a policy that has as its ultimate aims the complete elimination of Norwegian influence in the Islands, and the destruction of that democratic system by which the people were governed, and under which they held their lands.

Chapter 11.

The Pre-Reformation Church in Shetland 1500-1560.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Church and State in Shetland had undergone little change as the result of the Islands being pledged to Scotland in 1468. Both were still essentially Norwegian in character, and the people themselves looked rather to Norway than to Scotland for their inspiration and guidance in religion and politics. Indeed, it was not until near the close of the century that the influence of the new regime began to make itself felt.

It is true that the land was ruled by a nominee of the Scottish king, and that the See of Orkney, which included Shetland, had been transferred from the Province of Nidaros to that of St Andrews, nevertheless both the Church and State of Norway continued to take an active interest in the affairs of Shetland. This was only what might be expected, for Norway looked upon the pawning of the Islands as only of a temporary nature, and moreover, it was expressly stipulated in the marriage contract that the laws and customs were not to be impaired by the mortgage.^a

Thus though the Scandinavian age in Shetland ceased politically in 1468, in reality it continued for another century until the Stewart Earls made a determined effort to destroy the Norse system of government and compel
a. Orcades. Torfaeus p.191.

the people to live according to the laws and institutions of Scotland,^a an effort that in the end proved successful, and led to the suppression of all native liberties.

The government of the country, which was modelled on that of Norway, was democratic in character, and fostered a spirit of freedom and independence in its people. The government itself consisted of several courts or assemblies. The supreme court or parliament was the Althing, the great assembly of the country. This council met annually on the Thingholm in the loch of Tingwall, and over this gathering of Freemen the Head Fowde presided. Later it was known as the Lawting, i.e. a court of law,^b as the occasion for the meeting of Freemen for political and general purposes grew less.^b In the "Complaints and Probations" against Cultemalindie, the Lawting is described as "the principall Court haldin in the countrie in the haill yeir, to the quhilk all men aucht to cum, bayth Mayneland and yles, that hes land and heritage or grit takkis of the King."^c According to Goudie, "The last shadow of a local Thing was held in 1691."^d

The Freemen were called Odallers or Bondi,^e and in Shetland met in assembly as members of the Althing. There they sat as equals, no matter how much or how little property they possessed, and jealously guarded their rights and privileges. They were at

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. Intro. XV.

b. " " " " " " " p.95.

c. " " " " " " " p.95-6.

d. " " " " " " " p.96.

one and the same time peasants and noblemen. In this connection says Goudie, "The king might wed the Odaller's daughter, or match his own daughter to the Odal-born without disparagement, for he himself was but the Odal-born of a larger Odal."^a The only tax the Odaller paid to the king was the scat or tax on the common, on which he had the right of grazing his sheep and cattle. Originally he had no lord over him to whom he owed feudal duties. He had but two obligations, viz:- to defend his country when it was attacked,^b and to contribute to the upkeep of the Hov or temple.

There were also lesser courts for the administration of local affairs, such as the Herads-Thing, which met to deal with the affairs of the parish; the Hirdmans-Thing, an army council, and the Vard-Thing, an assembly which concerned itself with the affairs of a ward or district.^c

The chief official in connection with this democratic form of government in Shetland was the Head Fowde, who originally collected the king's Scat, but afterwards became the Chief Judge, and finally Sheriff of the Foudries of Zetland.^d Under him were the Parish Fowdes who looked after the local interests of the government. These officials were later superseded by the Bailies. There was also the Lawrightman of whose office Goudie says, "(it)

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p. 96.

b. Brøgger: Ancient Emigrants p. 135.

c. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p. 96.

d. " " " " " " " p. 93.

was as ancient as it was honourable." He was chosen by the Vard-Thing to look after the rights and interests of the people generally, and in particular to see that the Standards of Weights and Measures were not tampered with in any way.^a

As the native laws and customs were slowly but relentlessly forced to make way for those of Scotland, these offices gradually died out, the last to go being that of the Ranselman or Searcher, "whose duties in connection with Theft, Scandal and Marches were laid down in the 'Country Acts' framed in the seventeenth century"^b

At the time the Islands of Orkney and Shetland were pledged to Scotland, the Church possessed a very extensive estate both in Orkney and Shetland, and the right to these bishopric lands was clearly recognised by the Crown in the charters to the bishop in 1490 and 1501, "in which the Church estate is erected into a^a regality with the usual jurisdictions, with the patronage and advocacy of all churches and chapels, the seats and all other rights as of old enjoyed by the prelates and churchmen."^c

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the archdeanery of Shetland, which formed part of the See of Orkney contained seventeen parishes.^d

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.94.

b. " " " " " " " p.95.

c. Peterkin: Notes on Orkney and Shetland Vol.1.p.103.

d. Rankin: The Church of Scotland Vol.11.Book 11.p.358.

In the list of the pre-Reformation churches and chapels given by Goudie, the number of parishes in Shetland appears as ^a nineteen, but the discrepancy is accounted for by the fact that in this list Tingwall, Weisdale, and Whiteness are set down as separate parishes, whereas in reality they formed one benefice known as the Archdeanery of Tingwall.

So far, it has been impossible to discover what comprised the property of the benefices in the various parishes, nor do we know the value of the Teinds belonging to each parish. The earliest report we have on the Parochial Benefices of Shetland is that made by Pitcairne somewhere ^b between 1607 and 1612, that is, some fifty years after the setting up of the Reformation Church in Shetland. It can be readily understood that this report can give us very little idea of the lands and revenues of the pre-Reformation Church, when we bear in mind that in Shetland, as in Scotland, the landowners in each parish made use of the Reformation as an opportunity for seizing Church property, and adding it to their own, while the Crown also made its demands on Church property, and offered to the ministers of the Reformation a share of one-third of the former revenues.

Undoubtedly prior to the Reformation the Church possessed

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.163-4.

b. " " " " " " " p.153.

much property both in Shetland and in Orkney. Bishop Graham in his report on rentals to the Magistrates of Edinburgh in 1642, states that he understood "the old bishopric of Orkney was a great thing, and lay sparsim thro'out the haill parochines of Orkney and Shetland. Besyde his lands, he hade the teyndis of aughtene Kirks. His lands grew daily as irregularities increased in the countrey."^a

The bishop of the see lived in Orkney and had his palace at Kirkwall. From Orkney he superintended Shetland, and placed priests in the various parishes. These priests played on the superstitious fears of their parishioners, and preached with great fervour the doctrine of merit. As a result many of the Odallers gave lands to the Church in the name of some saint, who, they were assured by the priests, would plead on their behalf, and gain them admission to heaven.^b These lands were known as Stowk lands and were called by the name of some saint. We find for example on page 107 of Peterkin's Rentals of the Earldom and Bishoprick of Orkney, the heading "The Rentale of Sanct Duthois Stouck"

Moreover, it was the Church who first encroached on the Odaller's fenced land, on which he paid no tax. The bishop and the local priest imposed a tax of one-tenth of the corn land within the Odal fence, which they divided equally between themselves. The corn lands thus divided were alternated between them each year, so that neither might obtain an undue

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.168.

b. Gifford: Historical Description of the Zetland Islands. p.28.

advantage through the soil of the one half yielding more prolifically than that of the other. The bishop's share of the tithe was called the Umboth duties. Hibbert states that the word "Umboth" was intended to express in the northern language this alternate possession,^a but Goudie holds that "etymologically the word "Umboth" signifies administration by a delegacy, the duty having always apparently been collected by a representative of the absent bishop."^b The Umboth consisted of one-half of the corn tithes of every parish, except the united parishes of Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale (which formed the Archdeanery of Shetland) and were payable in butter, oil and occasionally money. When the bishopric revenues were acquired by the Crown by excambion with Bishop Law in 1614, the Umboth duties became part of the revenue of the Crown, and remain so to this day. This is how it came to pass that the vicars or parochial clergy in Shetland received only half of the corn tithes (decimae rectoriae)^c which elsewhere belonged in full to the parson or rector.

Although the bishops of the see of Orkney at this period rarely visited the northern portion of their diocese, and apparently exercised little supervision over it, except to place priests in the various parishes, and see that the Umboth duties were collected annually, nevertheless no view of the Church in Shetland at this time would be complete without a brief description of the bishops who ruled the

a. Hibbert: Description of the Shetland Islands. p.185.

b. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland p.180

c. " " " " " " " " p.180.

see of Orkney during the last sixty years of the pre-Reformation Church.

Andrew, the first bishop to be appointed under the Scots rule of St Andrews^a, was still bishop when this period opens, but on 8th April 1498 Edward Stewart was nominated as his successor and coadjutor, and was appointed by pope Alexander VI by bulls dated 10th July 1500. Edward bishop of Orkney occurs on 10th Oct 1509 in the Council **Baillie** and Guild Court Register of Aberdeen, and is in Parliament on 26th Nov. 1513. In his old age he too obtained a coadjutor. On 13th Dec. 1523 the Duke of Albany wrote to pope Clement VII and described Edward as enfeebled by old age, gout and other infirmities. Albany stated in his letter that it was at Edward's request that he wrote, and he commended John Beynstoun the bishop's 'brother', whom he had nominated, and prayed the pope to appoint him, reserving to Edward all the fruits of the see for his life, or that part of the fruits which he desired to retain. Edward bequeathed lands for the erection of chaplainries for the saying of masses for his own soul and that of Beynstoun, and the chaplainries were erected 10th April 1528, before which date he had died.^b

He is a somewhat shadowy figure, and we know practically nothing of his work as bishop of Orkney. We are, however, indebted to him indirectly for a very interesting **account** of Shetland in the beginning of the sixteenth century by Boethius,

a. Rankin: The Church of Scotland Vol. 2. Book 2. p.357.

b. Dowden: The Bishops of Scotland p.263.

for he says it was related to him "be ane noble man Edward sum time bischop of Orknay." He first of all speaks of the Shetland mainland, which he says is one hundred miles beyond Orkney. According to him its only riches are fish dried in the sun, though he mentions that hides and skins are exported to Scotland, and that ships from Holland and other European countries come to Shetland to trade. He declares that the people of Shetland are of the same nature and condition as those of Orkney. He then proceeds to speak of many islands lying beyond Shetland. These are evidently the North Isles, as the Faroes did not belong to the see of Orkney. There life is much the same as it is on the mainland. The people are poor, but live longer and are better content with their lives than those possessing greater wealth. In summer they catch enough fish to last them through the winter. There is no contention among them for private profit. They are naked of all ambition and never troubled with worries. He attributes this perfection of life to their simplicity, and to their following in the footsteps of Christ. Once a year there comes to them a priest out of Orkney, who ministers to them the sacrament of baptism, and after performing this duty he receives his teinds justly and returns to Orkney. Evidently the bishop himself had never visited these outlying islands, as Boethius in support of his account states that these things were told to Edward by a giant of a man who came from these islands to see him. His final conclusion is that these people

strikingly disprove the popular belief that people far from the sun are barbarous and miserable, for says he, "thair is na happier creaturis in the warld than thir peple of thir landis forsaid."^a

As we have already seen Edward Stewart had asked for a coadjutor, and John Beynstoun (variously spelt Benstoun, Beinston, Benston) was deputed by the pope on 24th April 1524 the coadjutor perpetual irrevocable to Edward bishop of Orkney, with Edward's consent, so that, on the resignation or death of Edward, John was provided to the see with retention of benefices, if he had any. Beynstoun probably died^b in 1526.

The next bishop was Robert Maxwell, son of Sir John Maxwell of Pollok. He was rector of Torbolton in 1521, provost of Dumbarton College and chancellor of Moray. He was provided by the pope to Orkney in 1526. The see is said in the consistorial entry to be void by the death of John Beinston. Maxwell was allowed to keep his benefices with certain reservations. He built the cathedral stalls in St Magnus Cathedral and provided bells for the steeple. The middle and largest of the three bells of the cathedral bear the legend "Made by Robert Maxull bischop of Orkney the year of God MDXXVlll. The year of the reign of James V. Robert Borthwick made me in the Castel of Edinburgh."^b

It was Maxwell who entertained James V when he visited the
 a. Boethius: History and Chronicles of Scotland. Vol 1. p. Ll.
 b. Dowden: The Bishops of Scotland p. 264.

Islands in 1540, the last year of Maxwell's office as bishop of Orkney.

Robert Reid the next bishop was the son of John Reid of Aikenhead, who was slain at the battle of Flodden. He entered the College of St Salvator, St Andrews in 1511, and took his M.A. in 1515. He then continued his studies at the University of Paris. He held the vicarages of Gartby, Brunkirk and Kirkcaldy. He was sub-dean and official of Moray, and was selected by Abbot Chrystal of Kinloss as his successor in 1526. On 14th April 1541 the see of Orkney became void, and Reid had the gift of the temporality during the vacancy. The king's letter presenting Reid to the pope for appointment is dated Stirling 5th April 1541. On July 20th 1541, at the entreaty of the king of Scots, the pope provides Reid to the Church of Orkney, void by the death of Robert Maxwell, with retention of the monastery of Kinloss and his other benefices and pensions and right of regressus. Reid was consecrated in the place of the Minor Friars at Edinburgh on the first Sunday in Advent, 27th Nov. 1541. When Bishop Reid paid a visit to Orkney he found the original constitution of the Cathedral in manuscript so injured by the damp that the full sense could not be discovered. Accordingly, he with the Chapter^a framed a new constitution on 28th Oct. 1544. He went as a commissioner to France for the marriage of Queen Mary, and died on his return to Dieppe 6th Sept. 1558, not without suspicion of poisoning, and was buried in the Chapel of a. Dowden: The Bishops of Scotland p. 265-6.

St Andrew, in the Church of St James, Dieppe. Reid was an able ecclesiastic, a great patron of learning, and the first founder of the College of Edinburgh by a legacy of 8000 merks.^a

Bellesheim describes him as bearing the most distinguished name in the Scottish hierarchy during the closing years of its existence, and says that he devoted himself unweariedly to the care and improvement of his remote diocese. He restored the venerable Cathedral of St Magnus at Kirkwall, established there a school for the youth of the Islands, and also made a new erection of the Cathedral Chapter.^b

Adam Bothwell, who succeeded Reid as Bishop of Orkney and Shetland, "was preferred to all the temporalities of the see of Orkney on the 11th October 1559," and was at the time of his appointment about thirty years of age. His father, Francis Bothwell, was one of the most distinguished men of his day, and held successively all the important civic posts in the city of Edinburgh, finally becoming the Provost of the city in place of the Earl of Arran, and a member of the College of Justice set up by James V. in 1532. Adam Bothwell was educated at the University of St Andrews, and in France. In 1552 he became rector of Ashkirk in succession to his brother William, and from there was appointed to the Bishopric of Orkney. As the first reformed bishop of that diocese he seems to have met with considerable opposition from the papists in Orkney, which was instigated by Sir John Bellenden, who was the lord Justice Clerk, and a near relative of Bothwell, and headed in Orkney itself

a. Rankin: The Church of Scotland Vol. 11. Book 11. p. 358.

b. Bellesheim: History of the Catholic Church of Scotland Vol. 11 p. 195-197.

by the powerful family of the Sinclairs.

Napier says, "No one is more closely connected with the history of Mary, Queen of Scots than Adam Bothwell, bishop of Orkney. He was of the number who went to France to anticipate her favour, and to escort her home. He joined her in marriage with the infamous Hepburn, earl of Bothwell. At the coronation of James VI. he anointed the infant king. He was of the commission that accused her at York. He accompanied Sir William Murray of Tullibardine, and Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange, in their desperate but unsuccessful pursuit of the Duke of Orkney." He had turned against Mary, and joined this expedition in an endeavour to placate the Kirk which he had grievously offended by his solemnisation of Queen Mary's marriage to the Earl of Bothwell. This adventure nearly cost him his life, for on overtaking the fugitive earl off the coast of Shetland, he ran his ship on a rock in Bressay Sound, in his eagerness to capture him. The ship began to sink rapidly, and there was barely time to launch a boat. The bishop, encumbered by his armour, to which he was not accustomed, was left behind. He shouted to the men as the boat began to move away, but they took no notice. He then made a mighty leap, and miraculously landed in the boat without upsetting it. The bishop's loup was long remembered, and the rock on which he was wrecked is known as the Unicorn to this day, that being the name of his ship.^a

a. Spottiswoode: History of the Church of Scotland Vol. 11. Napier's Note p. 71-75.

His new zeal for the Kirk, however, did not save him from the wrath of the General Assembly, for on 25th December 1567 he was delated to that Assembly "for not visiting the kirks of his countrie from Lambmesse to Allhallowmesse. Item. That he occupied the rowme of a Judge in the Sessioun. Item. Becaus he retained in his companie Francis Bothwell, a papist, upon whom he had bestowed benefices, and whom he had placed in the ministrie. Item. Becaus he solemnized the mariage betwixt the queene and the Erle of Bothwell."^a

When he did finally appear at the Assembly, he stated that he was unable to remain in Orkney all the year on account of the severity of the climate, and the weakness of his own body. He denied that he knew that Francis Bothwell was a papist, or that he had admitted him to the ministry. Nevertheless, the Assembly was not satisfied with his replies, and deprived him of all the functions of his ministerial office for having solemnised the marriage of the Queen to the Earl of Bothwell.

On 10th July 1568 the Bishop of Orkney was restored again to the ministry on condition that on a convenient occasion after the sermon in the Kirk of Holyroodhouse, he confessed his offence in solemnising the marriage of the Queen, and this he promised to^b do.

In the Assembly of June 1569, "Adam Bishop of Orknay was accused for not fulfilling of the injunction appointed by the Assembly in the month of July 1568."^c

a. Calderwood: History of the Kirk of Scotland Vol 11. p. 393.

b. " " " " " " " " "p. 424.

c. Spottiswoode: History of the Church of Scot. Vol. 11. Napier's Note p. 77.

On 25th February 1570 the Assembly returned to the attack, and charged Bothwell with several offences, three of which related to his office as Bishop of Orkney. In two of these he was accused of simony in connection with his exchange of the bishopric of Orkney for the abbacy of Holyrood. The third charged him with demitting "his cure in the hands of an unqualified person, without the consent of the Kirk, leaving the flock destitute without a shepheard, whereby not only ignorance is encreased, but also most abundantly all vices and horrible crimes there are committed, as the number of six hundred persons convicted of incest, adultery, and fornication, beares witness."^a

He replied to the charges of simony that he had been compelled "of meere necessitie to tak the abbacie of Halyrudhous by advice of sundrie godlie men, becaus then we could not have the occasioun of a Generall Assemblie." He also admitted that he had given the revenues of the bishopric of Orkney to Lord Robert in exchange for those of the abbacy of Holyroodhouse, but contended that it was a perfectly legitimate exchange and defrauded no one. As to the third charge he denied that he had demitted his office to Lord Robert. What had happened was "that the said Lord Robert intruded himself on his whole living with bloodshed and hurt of his servants," and forced him to withdraw to the abbacy of Holyroodhouse. He also maintained that as long as he was able he had attended to the ~~affairs~~ affairs of his diocese, had "preached the Word, and ministered the Sacraments, planted ministers in Orkney and Zetland, dispuned benefices, and gave stipends out of his

rents to ministers, exhorters, and readers, and when he was
 a. Spottiswoode: History of the Church of Scot. Vol. 11. Napier's
 Note. p. 77.

commissioner, visited all the kirks of Orkney and Zetland twice to the hazard of his life, in dangerous stormes on the seas, whereby he contracted sicknesse, to the great danger of his life, till he was suspended from the exercise of the said commssion in the yeere 1567, by reasoun of his infirmitie and sicknesse contracted through the airs of the countrie, and travells in time of tempest, at what time he desired some other place to travell in, which was then thought reasonable.^a"

There the matter ended apparently, for there is no further reference to it in the records of the Assembly. Bothwell held the abbacy of Holyroodhouse for the rest of his life, and at the same time still regarded himself as Bishop of Orkney, signing his name^b "Adame, Bischop of Orkney, Commendatair of Halyrudhous."

After a long and stormy career the Bishop died peacably in 1593, and was buried in the Chapel Royal of Holyrood, "where" says Napier,^c "his grave is yet shown to the curious stranger."

It must be evident from this brief account of the bishops of Orkney that during this period the Church in this northern see received very little personal supervision from these prelates. Shetland the northern part of the diocese, received even less attention than Orkney, for a hundred miles of stormy seas lay between the Bishop's Palace at Kirkwall, and the Archdeanery of Tingwall, and as a consequence some of the bishops never visited Shetland, and the rest but rarely. It is little wonder

that the pre-Reformation Church in Shetland of the sixteenth

a. Calderwood: History of the Kirk of Scotland. Vol. 11. p. 531.

b. Spottiswoode: History of the Church of Scot. Vol. 11. Napier's Note p. 77.

c. Spottiswoode: History of the Church of Scot. Vol. 11. Napier's Note. p. 78.

century, so cut off from the rest of the diocese, and so neglected by its bishops, has handed down but a few fragments of the history of those years of isolation and obscurity.

The work of the Church in Shetland from the time of the re-introduction of Christianity about the beginning of the eleventh century, ^{had} been carried on by the secular clergy. There is no record of any monastic orders having ever existed in the Islands, nor have the archeologists discovered any ruins of monastic houses that would lend colour to the idea that such orders had existed.

The Church from the first was organised under the parochial system, each parish with its priest ministering to the spiritual needs of the people. The churches and chapels in these parishes were small and plain buildings, accommodating from thirty to fifty people. Only three churches in the land had towers, one at Tingwall, another at Burra, and a third at Ireland (Eyrmland). These are said to have been built by three Norwegian sisters, and were all in sight of one another. They were known as the "Tower Churches."^a A minute in the Kirk-Session records of Tingwall, dated 8th May 1681, discloses the curious fact that the steeple^b of the church there was used as a prison.

These pre-Reformation churches and chapels were numerous in the Islands. H. Dryden in a letter dated 1868, enclosing the results of his examination of what was still left of the ruins

a. Goudie: The Eccles. Antiq. of the Southern Parishes of Shet. p. 292.

b. Extracts made by Sir Francis J. Grant from Tingwall Kirk-Session records.

of pre-Reformation churches says, "The number of churches which once existed in Shetland is extraordinary. For instance Unst, which is about 6 miles by 3, had at least twenty-four. Of most of the Shetland churches every trace but a name or a tradition is gone; of others only a heap of stones remains; of others a few fragments of walls enable us to make approximate plans, and one only is tolerably complete. Doubtless the tradition concerning nearly every church was true of some - that they were built as thankofferings for escape from an ocean grave."^a

Dryden examined the ruins of seven churches in Shetland, and the results of his examination support Goudie's assertion that these pre-Reformation churches and chapels were small and plain. One of these ruins was in Noss, an island close to Bressay; one was in Bressay itself; three were in Unst; another in Uyea, a little island to the west of Unst, and the seventh was in Yell. At that time the ruins of the kirk of Ness in North Yell were the best preserved of them all, and the building was used for worship up to 1750. All of them, except one, originally consisted of a nave and a chancel. The exception, the church at Culbinsbrough in Bressay "consisted of a nave, north and south transepts and chancel." The walls of these buildings varied in thickness from 2 feet 3 inches to 3 feet 8 inches.

The dimensions of these ruins do not vary very much, and the measurements of the chapel at Noss will be sufficient to show how small these edifices were. "The nave was about 18 feet 6 inches by 14 feet, and the chancel 12 feet east and west by 10 feet north

a. Macgibbon and Ross: The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland
Vol. 1. p.146.

and south,as shown by the ridge in the turf." ^a

Many of these churches had a high reputation for sanctity, and pilgrimages were made to them long after the abolition of popery. The burying- ground of Eshaness in the parish of Northmavine contains the foundation of a once famous kirk, known as the Cross Kirk. Long after the Reformation had been ushered in, it continued to be a resort of pilgrims. The very snails on its smouldering walls were thought to possess its virtues, and were collected and dried and used as a remedy for Jaundice. The devotees used to walk to the church at Candlemas, in the dead of night, with lighted candles in memory of Christ the spiritual light. These would be lighted up whenever thunder was heard or malevolence of demons was apprehended. At length the minister of Northmavine Mr Hercules Sinclair, exasperated by the persistence of these popish superstitions caused the building to be razed to the ^a ground.

As has already been stated there were seventeen parishes in Shetland, the principal one being Tingwall, which in the sixteenth century included Weisdale and Whiteness. The Archdeanery of Shetland itself was an ancient one. It had been endowed by Jerome Cheyne, archdeacon after the Islands had ceased to be under the jurisdiction of Adalbert, ^b Archbishop of Bremen, who died in 1394. The pre-Reformation church was dedicated to St Magnus at Tingwall, the church at Weisdale to

a. Hibbert: Description of the Shetland Islands p.531.

b. Walcott: The Ancient Church of Scotland. p.178.

Our Lady, and that of Whiteness to St Ola.^a

On the 21st Jan. 1501 a presentation of the Archdeanery of Shetland was made to M. Henry Phanteich. In the minute in which this presentation is made, full right to make it is claimed on behalf of the Scottish king in conjunction with the Bishop of Orkney.^b There was, however, considerable opposition to this appointment. It appears from a letter dated 8th January 1502, and sent by the Privy Council to Henry Lord Sinclair, and David Sinclair knight sheriffs, that a chaplain named Sir Mawnys Herwod had purchased the Archdeanery from the king of Denmark, and had taken his presentation thereupon to the great prejudice of the king of Scotland anent his said right. The sheriffs were ordered to charge in the king's name and authority the said Sir Mawnys and all other persons to have no intromitting with the said Archdeanery or to purchase of the king of Denmark thereupon under pain of treason, considering the presentation thereof concerns the king of Scotland's heritage.^c

On 27th Jan of the same year, another letter was sent to Lord Sinclair charging him as principal justice within the bounds of Orkney and Shetland, to command and charge in the name of the king all his lieges spiritual and temporal, that none of them should take upon themselves to do anything contrary to their sovereign's presentation given

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p. 163-4.

b. Register of the Privy Council Vol. 1 p. 617.

c. " " " " " Vol. 1. p. 755.

to M. Henry Phanteich of the Archdeanery of Shetland, or to vex or trouble him or his procurators in the peaceable taking of the said Archdeanery under pain of rebellion and putting them to the ^a **horn**.

It is evident from the state of affairs disclosed by this correspondence, that the king of Denmark considered that he still possessed the right of making presentations to benefices in Shetland, in spite of the see being under the jurisdiction of St Andrews, and that some, at least, of the parishioners in the Archdeanery were of the same opinion, and ready to stand by the king in his contention.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that as late as 1524 Olav Engelbertson, Archbishop of Drontheim, commissioned Wardenberg Provost of Gustrova and Apostolic Scribe, then residing at Rome, to obtain copies of the bull of Pope Sixtus and other documents, and to advise him of the best means of recovering the Church of Orkney to his jurisdiction. Wardenberg carried out this commission, but nothing further was done. Bellesheim says, "He found doubtless that an ecclesiastical arrangement which had lasted for upwards of fifty years, was not easily disturbed; and the first mutterings, besides, were beginning to be heard of the storm of revolution which was soon to sweep away the Norwegian church."^b

Henry Phanteich, Archdeacon of Shetland, was

a. Register of the Privy Council Vol. 1. p. 762.

b. Bellesheim: History of the Catholic Church of Scot. Vol. 11. p. 91-92.

succeeded by Malcolm Halcrow, as far as can be ascertained.

In a charter of sale dated 27th April 1531, the name of Master Malcome Hawcro,^a Archdeacon of Shetland, appears as a witness.

In another deed of sale executed in 1536, he reappears as "Malcum Hawcro ersdene of Zetland,"^b and for the third and last time his name is found in a charter dated 30th April 1545.^c

He was in all probability succeeded by Jerome Cheyne, but the date of his presentation to the benefice is unknown, and the earliest evidence we have of his being minister of Tingwall is found in the accounts of the Collector General of Thirds dated^d 1561.

Dunrossness Parish. The pre-Reformation church belonging to this parish was at Quendale, and was later known as the Cross Kirk, either on account of its cruciform shape, or because it had been dedicated to the Holy Cross. James Pitcairn, a minister of Northmavine, who drew up a list of the parishes of Shetland with the heading "The Just Rentelis of the Benefices callit the Vicarages wt the Number of the Kirkis pertening thairto, as they have beine of old and as they are now callit in Prebentis," states in his report that this church was dedicated to St Matthew, but there has been much controversy about the matter, and the point has never been settled.^e

There were also two other churches within the parish, one on

a. Calendar of Charters, Register House, Edinburgh No. 1068.

b. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p. 142.

c. The Great Seal No. 3101.

d. Collector General of Thirds 1561. Register House, Edinburgh.

e. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p. 158.

St Ninian's Isle, dedicated to the saint of that name, and the other at Clumlie, and this latter church, Goudie thinks, was dedicated to St Columba. He bases his argument on the assertion that Clumlie is a corruption of Choluim-Cille, the Gaelic for Columba's cell, and also on the fact that the parish church of Sandwick now situated near to Clumlie, is designated St Columban.^a

Sometime during the sixteenth century Fair Isle was added to the parish of Dunrossness, and according to the "Buik of Assignatiouns of the Ministeris and Reidaris Stipendis" for the year 1576, the church there was called the Croce Kirk. MacKinlay also says " There was a Cross Kirk on Fair Isle lying midway between the Orkney and the Shetland groups; but it is not certain was so called from its cruciform shape or its dedication. If not cruciform, the chapel probably re-called the Holy Rood, but if cruciform it may have been under some other invocation."^b

To this day Fair Isle retains its connection with Dunrossness, and the minister of Dunrossness is its interim-moderator, and visits it once a year for communion and baptisms.

In a deed of sale executed in the year 1525 appears the name of Master Henry Strang, vicar of Dunrossness,^c and in another deed dated 1546 we find the name of Sir Nicoll Wyschert, vicar of Dunrossness.^d

Sandwick. It is almost certain that the church at Sandwick was

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.163.

b. MacKinlay: Ancient Church Dedications in Scot. Scriptural
Dedications p.369.

c. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.141.

d. " " " " " " p.145.

dedicated to St Magnus.^a Goudie in a note states that traces of two other chapels have been discovered in this parish, though nothing of either remains. The one was at Ireland (Eyrreland) a towered church, to which reference has already been made, and the other at Levenwick. He suggests that this latter chapel, of which no record or tradition remains, may have been dedicated to the Celtic St Leven, a favourite saint in Cornwall,^c and the bay and district named therefrom - Levenwick.^b

Of the priests who laboured in this parish for the last sixty years prior to the Reformation, not one single name has been preserved, so far as we can discover.

Cunningsburgh. The church at Cunningsburgh was dedicated to -----
St Paul, though it is also said to have borne the name of St Columba. In this connection MacKinlay says "In this case it is quite conceivable that the apostle may have supplanted the Celtic missionary as titular of the building."^c The original church stood near the sea, and its burying-ground is still used. Its associations go back to the Picts, and several Ogham-inscribed stones have been found in it, and these relics undoubtedly point to Celtic influences existing when the original church was reared.^d

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.158.

b. " " " " " " " p. ~~158~~ 163.

c. MacKinlay: Ancient Church Dedications in Scot. Non-Scriptural Dedications p.261.

d. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet p.67.

Here again, as in Sandwick, we have no record of the names of any of the priests of this period.

Sandsting. According to tradition the church in Sandsting was -----^a dedicated to St Mary. In a certificate dated 1545, which confirms an excambion made in 1516, we find the name of Sir Andro Wissiarth, parish master in Sandzting.^b In what may be described as the testing clause, he is called parish priest.^c The title "parish master" (Sogne Her Herr) evidently refers to some secular dignity or charge.^d He was probably the last of the pre-Reformation incumbents. Whether he became a protestant and saved his living, or refused to do so and was ejected, it is impossible to say.^e

Walls. The church at Walls was dedicated to St Paul, and still -----^f bears that name.

Sandness. The church at Sandness was dedicated to St Margaret.^g -----
Delting. Sibbald says of this parish, "Here in old time there -----
was but one parish church northwestward at Scatstage called St Pauls Church, somewhat eccentric for the people, wherefore it was deserted, and is now become altogether ruinous, but the inhabitants here (for their better accommodation in Gospel Ordinances)

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.164.

b. " " " " " " " p.82.

c. " " " " " " " p.83.

d. " " " " " " " p.86.

e. " " " " " " " p.85-86.

f. " " " " " " " p.164.

g. " " " " " " " p.164.

afterwards erected and built two churches, one at Olna Firth in the south end called St Olla's Church, and the other in the north end of Daleting called St Magnus's Church." ^a

The names of the clergy who were settled in these parishes during this period are unknown.

Northmavin and Ollaberry. The churches in this parish were -----
dedicated to St Olaf, St Magnus and St Gregory respectively. ^b

There was also in this parish the notorious Cross Kirk, to which reference has already been made.

In a deed of sale dated 1525 the name of name of Maister Robert Hector, vicar of Northmewene appears. ^c

Yell. In Yell there were churches dedicated to St John, St Ola and -----
St Magnus. ^d

Here again we can find no trace of the priests who were appointed to Yell during this period.

Unst. In this parish the church at Haroldswick was dedicated -----
to Our Lady; the church at Baliasta to St John; the church at wick to St Ola, and the church at Baltasound to St Sineva. ^e

The name of one priest who laboured in Unst during this period has been preserved for us. It is the name of Sir Andrew Hill. It appears in the Confirmatory Certificate dated 1545, already referred to in connection with Sandsting. In it he is

a. Sibbald: The Description of the Isles of Orkney and Shet. p.65-6

b. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.164.

c. " " " " " " " p.141

d. " " " " " " " p.164.

e. " " " " " " " p.164.

described as "Sir Andro Hiel, parish priest and official over
 Hieltland in temporals."^a

It is very evident from the above description that he held some secular position as deputy for the bishop in addition to his spiritual office. He is again mentioned in another deed as late as 1569. In this his designation as vicar is retained, which seems to show, that since his name is not found among the Reformation ministers, he did not conform to the new faith, but notwithstanding was allowed to retain his benefice during his lifetime.^b

Fetlar. The church in Fetlar was called the Cross Kirk. There

 are also the remains of sveral pre-Reformation chapels in
 the island.^c

In this instance also the names of the priests of this
 pre-Reformation period have been lost.

Nesting. The church in this parish was dedicated to St Ola.^d

The name of Sir George Duff, curate of Nesting, appears
 as a witness in a deed dated 1538.^e The next name we find is that of Sir George Strang. It appears in a deed dated 1567. In this document his death is referred to, and his successor appointed.^f
 It is probable that he had been appointed to Nesting before the

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.82.

b. " " " " " " " p.86.

c. " " " " " " " p.164.

d. " " " " " " " p.164.

e. " " " " " " " p.143.

f. " " " " " " " p.147.

Reformation. It is not known whether he conformed, or refusing to do so, was permitted to retain his benefice..

Lunnasting. The church at Lunnasting was dedicated to St

-----a--

Margaret. We have no record of the names of any of the priests who officiated in Lunnasting during this period.

Whalsay. The church in the island of Whalsay was known as the

----- b

Cross Kirk. Here again, the names of the priests who were appointed to Whalsay during this period are unknown to us.

From the foregoing survey of the pre-Reformation Church in Shetland during the last sixty years of its existence it will be seen that it is a period for the most part wrapped in obscurity. There are no chronicles to throw any light on the happenings of those days, nor, with the exception of a few scattered documents, are there any records from which we may build up a satisfactory history of the Church of that period. All that we can discover about the parochial organisation of the Church in the Islands during the first half of the sixteenth century, is that it was a part of the see of Orkney, and as such, was attached to the province of St Andrews; that it was divided into parishes which were ministered to by secular clergy, and that those parishes, roughly speaking, correspond to those of the present day; that many of the churches were dedicated to saints, the majority to saints of Scandinavian origin, and that of all the priests who were

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.164.

b. Goudie: " " " " " " p.164.

appointed to benefices in Shetland during this period, the names of only nine have been preserved.

When we come to consider the property possessed by the Church in the Islands during this period, and the teinds given to the clergy, we can only do so in a general way. The information at our disposal is vague and meagre.

There was first of all the Bishopric lands scattered throughout the Islands. That these constituted a very valuable estate we know from Bishop Graham's report to which we have already referred. We possess no information as to the value of the estate, nor do we know where its various properties were situated. It is not until the year 1600 that we are furnished with a detailed list of these lands and their localities. By this time, however, the estate had suffered much at the hands of the Earls of Orkney, and their followers, so that it is impossible to say what was the exact extent and value of the property owned by the See of Orkney just prior to the Reformation. These lands were, moreover, the cause of constant strife, owing to their being mixed up with those of the Earldom. There were endless disputes about their ownership and boundaries. To put an end to this friction Bishop Law in 1614 made an excambion with the Crown, whereby he received a property concentrated in one district in Orkney for the Bishopric lands scattered over Orkney and Shetland. After this excambion the Church ceased to possess any Bishopric lands in Shetland.^a

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p.168.

In addition to these Bishopric lands there were properties in Shetland owned by ecclesiastical bodies, both in Orkney and Norway. In a deed dated 1539, we find a tack or lease by the Canons of the Cathedral Church of St Magnus, Kirkwall of certain lands in the parish of Dunrossness and elsewhere in Shetland, held by them for "their service and uphalding of the morning mass said at Our Lady's altar within the Cathedral Kirk of Orkney." This tack is for nineteen years, and was made to Sir David Fallusdell, Prebender of St Duthos Kirk in Orkney.^a

The Monastery of St Michael's, Bergen also possessed a large landed estate in Shetland, as set out in the Brevebog or Chartulary of the Monastery.^b

By what process properties such as these passed from the ownership of these ecclesiastical bodies we do not know. But generally speaking, when the Catholic Church of Norway was swept away in 1537, the King of Denmark and Norway confiscated these properties for the Crown, and leased them to private individuals, until the Scottish Crown interfered and took them over.

We have no information as to the value of the benefices in this pre-Reformation period. As in Scotland, they were altered beyond recognition at the time of the Reformation, by the wholesale seizure of Church lands, until some of the glebes entirely disappeared.

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. pl36.

b. " " " " " " " p. 101-2.

The stipend of the **priests** at this period, was derived mainly from the corn teind, of which the parish priest received half, the other half, as we have seen, going to the Bishop of Orkney, except in the case of the Archdeanery of Tingwall, where the Archdeacon received the whole of it.

As has already been observed, only a few of the names of the priests who were appointed to Shetland parishes during the period 1500-1560, have been preserved for us, and these for the most part, appear as witnesses in deeds. The fact that they are Scottish names is not surprising, for the process of Scottising the Church in Orkney and Shetland had begun before this period away back in the fifteenth century. Brøgger speaks of "the ecclesiastics from Scotland, who during the fifteenth century overran the Orkneys and Shetlands, and collected diaconates, precentorships and benefices wholesale," and adds, "we can say with fair certainty that in the Orkneys at least, not only was there not a single Norse ecclesiastic, but not even a native of the Orkneys or Shetlands." ^a

Yet in spite of the continual invasion of laymen and clerics from Scotland, the Norse language continued to hold its own. Contracts of sale and private legal documents were written in Norse long after Shetland was handed over to Scotland.

Norse as the native tongue was in use in Shetland for a great part of the sixteenth century, and not before the beginning of the seventeenth century did it give place to Lowland Scotch. In formularies and church prayers it was used for

a much longer period, and as late as 1770 the Lord's Prayer was said in a corrupt form of Norse.^a To-day in Shetland, Norse, for the most part survives only in place names,^b but the pronunciation and accentuation are still distinctly Norse.

a. Brøgger: Ancient Emigrants. p.186-7.

b. Jakobson: Old Shet. Dialect. Place Names of Shetland. p.11.

Chapter III.

The Reformation in Shetland 1560-1605.

The Reformation in Scotland was formally inaugurated by the Scottish Parliament on 24th August 1560. It is outside the scope of this work to inquire into the causes that brought about this great change. They were many and varied. The corruption and cruel intolerance of the Old Church, the influence of the Reformation already in progress in Germany, Switzerland and England, the preaching of Hamilton, Wishart, Knox and other reformers, and the eagerness of the nobility to foster a movement which promised an opportunity of their enriching themselves at the expense of the Church, all these factors entered into the consummation of the Reformation in Scotland. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that these causes operated in Shetland to any extent. The Reformation in Shetland owed its origin to the policy of the reformers in Scotland, rather than to any desire on the part of the people for a change. It came from without rather than from within, though it is true that the Earls of Orkney, Robert and Patrick Stewart, and their satellites were as eager to make use of it for their own aggrandisement, as were the nobles in Scotland.

The Scottish Parliament of 1560 did four things.

- (1) It gave its sanction to a new Creed or Confession of Faith.
- (2) Abolished Papal jurisdiction in Scotland.
- (3) Rejected former statutes in favour of the Roman Catholic Church.

(4) Abolished the Mass, and enacted laws for the punishment^a of the sayers and hearers of the Mass.

On 29th May 1560 the First Book of Discipline was drawn up, completed, and accepted by the General Assembly, though not by Parliament. It is an exposition of the new polity of the Church. In it the officials of the Church were set out as ministers, readers, superintendents, elders, deacons. There is no reference to elders or deacons in any of the records of Shetland belonging to this period. Only the first three classes are found.

In this new polity each congregation was to have the right of calling its own minister, and at first the minister was ordained without the laying on of hands. Within a few years, however, this was seen to be a mistake, and was rectified. The reader was a temporary substitute for the minister, owing to the scarcity of the latter. He was not allowed to baptise, perform the marriage ceremony, or celebrate Communion. He was permitted under certain circumstances however, to conduct the ordinary service of the Church, with the aid of the printed prayer-book. In dealing with Scripture he might briefly explain it, or base a few remarks of exhortation on it, but he was not to attempt a sermon. There were quite a number of these readers in Shetland, and though in 1581 their abolition was voted by the Assembly, they lingered on long after this in Shetland and in^b other remote places.

The most remarkable of these early offices was that of
a. Rankin: The Church of Scotland Vol 11. Book 111. p. 434 - 5.

b. " " " " " " " " p. 438 - 439.

the superintendent. There were to be ten, though the full number was never appointed. Their special work was to plant kirks, and provide ministers or readers for the various parishes. They were to remain no more than twenty days in one place during their visitation, and to preach at least thrice a week. They were not to stay in their principal place more than three or four months at a time. Their office resembled that of a bishop in some respects, for they had charge of a number of churches and churchmen in a given district, and had a more ample income than the ministers. On the other hand they had no special consecration beyond that of the ordinary minister. One of them indeed was a layman. They were liable also to be called to account by the General Assembly, which was composed of ministers and laymen.^a

A similar class of men called commissioners was also created. They had lesser districts assigned to them, and were not bound to live in their districts.^b

The growth of the Presbyterian system of church government was very slow, and it may be said that the government of the Church was more or less prelatical till 1638. The old titles of archbishop, bishop, abbot, rector, vicar were still retained, and at the Concordat of Leith, held in 1572 it was resolved that the names and titles of the archbishops and bishops should not be altered, or the bounds of the dioceses

a. Rankin: The Church of Scotland Vol. 11. Book 111. p. 440.

b. " " " " " " " " " p. 440.

confounded, though the proviso was added that the archbishops and bishops should exercise no further jurisdiction in spiritual functions than the superintendents. This resolution, however, was not so much the outcome of a desire to retain prelacy, as to enable the nobility to draw the revenues of the Church properties, through their ecclesiastical nominees, who were called in derision "tulchan" bishops, tulchan being the Gaelic name for a calfskin stuffed with straw, which was set up beside a cow to deceive her into giving her milk freely.^a

In 1592 the Assembly met and formulated four articles as a petition to the king. This was presented to Parliament by the king, and as a result, an Act was passed which has often been called the Magna Charta of Presbytery. Among other things it ratified the liberty of the Church, gave a legal jurisdiction to its courts, and provided that presentations to benefices should henceforward be directed, not to the bishops, but to the Presbyteries within whose bounds the vacant benefices lay.^b At this time also the offices of superintendent and reader^c were dropped.

It must always be borne in mind that the Presbyterian form of government, as we know it in the Church of Scotland, was not ushered in with the Reformation, but only slowly and gradually displaced the Prelatical system. An evidence of this

a. Rankin: The Church of Scotland. Vol. 11. Book 111 p. 457.

b. " " " " " " " " p. 469.

c. " " " " " " " " p. 472.

is to be found in the fact that the first attempt to divide Scotland into Presbyteries was made in 1581, and even this was a compromise, the title of this court being "the forme of the Presbyteries and Diocies." Orkney stands first in the list with the two Presbyteries of Kirkwall and Tingwall.^a When these two Presbyteries first met is not known. We first hear of their meeting in Synod at St Magnus Cathedral in 1592, when four non-resident ministers belonging to Shetland were^a deposed.

For a few years from 1592 onward, the Presbyterian system was in operation to a limited extent, but by the beginning of the seventeenth century King James VI was doing everything in his power to replace it by Episcopal government, and the appointment of Bishop Law to the Diocese of Orkney in 1605 was the outward and visible sign of the establishment of Prelacy in the Islands.

Before proceeding to a detailed study of the parishes and ministers in Shetland belonging to this period, it will be necessary for us to have some idea of the general situation there, as it is impossible to view this or any other history of the Church in vacuo.

For fifty years Orkney and Shetland were the victims of oppression and cruelty under the successive regimes of the Earls Robert and Patrick Stewart. The story of their exactions, flouting of the law, and brutality generally is almost incredible. No one was safe from their depredations, the Church least of all.

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney. Vol. II. p. 72.

This half-century of tyranny began when Robert Stewart a natural son of King James V was granted a charter through the influence of the Regent Moray his half-brother, on 26th May 1564. By it he obtained a written title "to all and whole the lands of Orkney and Zetland, with all and sundry the isles belonging and pertaining thereto, with all and each of the castles, towers, fortalices, woods, mills, multures, fishings, tenents, service of free tenents, with the whole superiority of free tenents, advocacy, donation of churches, and with the office of Sheriff of Orkney, and Sheriff of the Fouldrie of Zetland." For this he was to pay to the Crown a feu-duty of £2006:13:4^a Scots per annum.

By this Charter the rights and privileges of the Odallers were, to say the least, put in jeopardy, and a deliberate attempt made to substitute feudalism for the democratic system instituted by Norway.

It was also an attempt to override the charters already granted to the Bishops in 1490 and 1501, by which the Church estate was erected into a regality, with the usual jurisdictions, with the right of patronage and advocacy of all churches and chapels, the seats and all other rights previously enjoyed by the prelates and other churchmen.

There is abundant evidence that Robert Stewart Earl of Orkney and Zetland made the most of his opportunities under the Charter, and availed himself of every pretext to enrich himself at the expense of his longsuffering victims.

a. Peterkin: Notes on Orkney and Shetland p.101-2.

He interfered in the affairs of the Church for his own profit, by disposing of benefices which were vacant, to whom he pleased, as he did in the case of the vicarages of St Ula, Holm, Unst, Scatsta, Nesting, Walls and others. He also compelled beneficed men to set their benefices to him, or else leave the country, and interfered with the teinds, and even deprived ministers of their livings if they withstood his desire, nor did he hesitate to use violence towards them if they failed to be amenable.^a

In 1567 the Charter was withdrawn, and a new one was granted by Queen Mary to the Earl of Bothwell, whom she had just married and created "Duke of Orkney." In this charter, however, there is no mention of the whole lands and islands and superiority thereof, but only the earldom lands and isles are mentioned. Bothwell did not, however, hold his dukedom long, only a few months in fact, and it is difficult to say what were Earl Robert Stewart's relations to the Islands for the next fourteen years, although it has been asserted that he resumed possession after Bothwell's flight and disgrace.^b He acted, however, as if he were in possession of the Islands, for as we have already seen in 1572 he exchanged with Bishop Bothwell the Commendatorship of Holyroodhouse for the temporalities of the See of Orkney.

In 1581 Robert Stewart received a new grant of the Crown's estate in Orkney and Shetland, to be called the Earldom of Orkney and the Lordship of Shetland.

a. Balfour: Oppressions in Orkney and Shetland p.6.

b. Peterkin: Notes on Orkney and Shetland p.108-9-10.

In 1587 the earldom estate was once more resumed by the Crown, and the right to present benefices was explicitly stated to belong to the King. The earldom estate was then let for about two years to the Lord Chancellor and the Justice Clerk for £4000 Scots per annum. When these persons relinquished their lease, Robert Stewart obtained a new grant from the Crown on 1st April 1589, at a rental of £2073:6:8 Scots.^a In 1591 he obtained a new infeftment, and this contained a clause in it which gave him "the right of patronage of all the benefices within Orkney and Zetland."^b He did not live long to enjoy this new opportunity for spoliation, and on his death the earldom was again resumed by the Crown.

It was not till 1st March 1600 that his son, Patrick Stewart,^u obtained a fresh Crown Charter of the Crown's estate in Orkney and Shetland. On 15th May of the same year he also secured a Crown Charter of the Bishopric of Orkney. In this Charter the Bishopric lands are set out in detail. The area of each piece of land is given in merks, and also the name of the locality in which it is situated. The bulk of the Bishopric lands was in Orkney. We give here an extract from the Charter which sets out the lands in Shetland belonging to the Bishopric. This shows that the total area of the lands in Shetland held by the Church in this way amounted to only a little over four hundred merks; that these for the most part were situated in the parishes of Tingwall and Dunrossness, and that they were scattered over the districts of these parishes in small areas, being probably only remnants of much larger properties, which had belonged to the

a. Peterkin: Notes on Orkney and Shetland p.111.

b. " " " " " " p.113.

Bishopric before the Reformation.

"28 mercat. terrarum de Tingwall et Crista, 3 mercat. de Glaisbo,
 9 mercatas de Satter, 15 mercatas de South-Satter, 6 mercat. de
 Carkasatter, 9 mercat. de North-Garth, 7 mercat. in Stainisweill,
 12 mercatas in Howland, 6 mercatas in Howknabrek, 12 mercat. in
 Skalloway, $2\frac{1}{2}$ mercatas in Howle, 3 mercat. in Tow, 12 mercat. in
 Kabuster, 3 mercat. de Weyisland, 14 mercat. de South Caldcluiffis,
 2 mercat. de Nowsaweill (Nowsaweill) 15 mercat. de Weyisgarthe,
 23 mercatas de Treisland, 22 mercatas in Coit, 3 mercatas in
 Stroan, tres mercatas in Grondweill, 10 mercatas in Belista,
 decem mercatas in Swynneastter, 3 mercatas in Wetbust r, 7 mercat.
 in Nethir Furde (vel Sund) 14 mercat. in Weik, 2 merc. in Schortoun,
 2 mercat. in Sound, 5 mercat in Setter, 3 (vel 1) mercat. in Brindista
 6 mercat. in Linksetter, in Dunrosnes 6 mercat. in Bleusta, 3 mercat. in
 Ringisto, 2 mercat. in Croce-yle, 4 mercat. in Oxna-ile, 4 mercat. in
 Hildeshay, 12 mercat. in Weirmadyik, mercatam in Weisbister (vel
 Weisbister), 2 mercat. in Toftnes (or, Distines), 3 mercat. in Burganes,
 5 mercat. in Stronnes, 6 mercat. in Howgowland, 6 mercatas in
 Hagistra, mercatam in Strone, mercatam in Hilliegarth, 9 mercat. in
 Kirkgothrie, 3 mercat. in Hammerland, mercatam in Brek, tres mercat. in
 Stronfurde, 2 mercat. in Browagarthe, mercatam in Halysbuster, 3 mercat.
 Mynstovie alias Scheltoun, 3 mercat. de Cakeron, mercatam in Dekeron,
 2 mercat. in Howscart, $2\frac{1}{2}$ mercat. in Towsavalle, $1\frac{1}{2}$ (vel $2\frac{1}{2}$) mercat.
 de Nethir Sound, 2 mercat. in Overabusk, mercatam in Lesbiater, 2
 merc. in Howgowland, 2 mercat. in Trondera, $2\frac{1}{2}$ mercat. in Utirsland,
 3 mercat. in Luhalinesay, alias Sercheskillie, mercatam in Biksetter
 in parochia de Ausling (Austing), mercatam de Seksetter in parochia
 de Wais, que omnes olim ad Archdecanum Zetlandie pertinuerunt,

terras que olim pertinuerunt ad canonicos et stellarios dicte ecclesie cathedralis infram patriam de Zetland in parochiis de Dunrosnes, Burray, Golderberrieweik, Quhitnes, Urdisdail (Wodisdail), Standsling (Sandsting?), Delting, Yell, Fetlair et Unst, 24 mercat. de Astay in parochia de Tingwall, que olim ad lie Stouke seu prebendam S. Egedii de Astay pertinuerunt, in dicta regalitate, vic. Zetland, 12 mercat. terrarum de Weyisgarth cum manso, in parochia de S. Joannis de Balyeasta et insula de Unst, que olim ad vicariam de Unst pertinuerunt, in dicta regalitate et Faudria de Zetland." ^a

Thus Earl Patrick held both the Earldom and Bishopric lands of Orkney and Shetland, and became all powerful in the Islands. He proved to be as great a tyrant as his father, and lived like a feudal baron in his castle at Scalloway. His mandates were law in the Islands, and the inhabitants were too weak to resist him. He also made the Islanders enter into a bond with him to take his part in any quarrel, even against the King. They also bound themselves to be judged by the Earl, without reserving or acknowledging any appeal to the King, Council or Session. He made all who used the passages and ferries of the Islands buy a special permit from him, and compelled those who were engaged in trade to obtain special licences for the buying and selling of goods, and punished all who refused to do so with fines or imprisonment. He seized property on the most flimsy pretexts, and built his castle ^b at Scalloway with the forced labour of the King's tenants.

Earl Patrick, like his father before him, divided his time between Orkney and Shetland, but there was another sinister

a. Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, No. 1038. p. 350-1.

b. Catton: The History and Description of the Shet. Isles p. 31.

figure who devoted himself solely to the exploitation of Shetland, and was the willing and unscrupulous tool of both the Earls in turn. This was Laurence Bruce of Cultemalindie, the half-brother of Robert Stewart. He settled in Shetland in 1571, and was made Underfowde thereof. He sought to emulate the Stewarts, and for some years harried the unfortunate Islanders with extortions and oppressions of every kind. In 1575, however, through the courage and patriotism of Arthur Sinclair of Aith, his notorious conduct was brought before the Regent Morton, and a commission was sent to take evidence. Several courts were held and a number of charges were made against him, the principal one being that he had altered the ancient standard weights and measures to increase the skat and other duties which the Odallers and other tenants paid to the earldom. As the weights and measures were in the keeping of the Lawrightman, among whose other duties was that of assessor in the parochial courts, he removed the then holders of this office, in order to fill it with creatures of his own. He also entered into an arrangement with the Dutch merchants, upon whom the Islanders depended for their victuals, whereby for a consideration, he permitted them to cheat by using unjust measures.. He helped himself to the provisions of the inhabitants, and levied imposts, such as the one on swine, which was so unpopular that the people rather than pay it, killed their pigs. Accompanied by a band of "broken men" he billeted himself in the houses of the people, and remained in each place till the larder was exhausted.

As the result of this commission he was deprived of his

office of Fowde. By this time he had amassed a considerable amount of property, and seems to have spent his time in making disturbances, and interfering with the rights of others. In 1598 he began to build the Castle of Muness in Unst. Its ruins are still standing, and over the doorway may be read the following lines:-

"List ye to knaw this building quha began,
Laurance the Brus he was that worthy man,
Quha earnestlie his ayris and affspring prayis,
To help and not to hurt this wark alwayis."

On 30th June 1597 he was ordained to find caution by the Privy Council to the extent of 5000 merks, and in 1610 he appeared as a witness against Patrick Earl of Orkney. On 14th August 1614 the Privy Council appointed him a commissioner to apprehend any of the rebels from Orkney, who might seek refuge in Shetland, presumably on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief. He died in August 1617.^a

It is impossible to say what exactly happened when the Reformed Church was established in Shetland, but generally speaking, it may be said that in Shetland, as in England, the reformed religion, at the command of the rulers, assumed a prelatic type, which appears to have prevailed till Episcopacy was abolished in Scotland by the memorable Assembly of 1638. The clergymen who were in Shetland at the time of the Reformation seem to have found no difficulty in conforming to the new order of things, especially as by so doing, they avoided the loss of their livings.

a. F.J.Grant: The County Families of the Zetland Islands. p.18-21.

There is no record of any priest in Shetland being ousted from his living at this time for refusing to conform to the Reformed Faith, and the new order of ministers and readers meant little to these men, who in their remote and isolated parishes remained priests at heart, and were undisturbed by the great changes that were taking place elsewhere.

As we have seen, at the time of the Reformation Adam Bothwell was Bishop of Orkney and Shetland. He conformed to the Reformed Faith, and was entrusted with the superintendency of the Islands, but he used the title "Bishop of Orkney" all his days. He seems to have exercised his supervision chiefly by means of correspondence, and from his own statement to the Assembly of 1570 we learn that he had visited the kirks of Orkney and Shetland only twice up to that time, and there is no record of his ever visiting his diocese after that date.

It was not till 1568 that a commissioner was appointed to Shetland. This was Gilbert Foulsey, a Presbyter of the diocese of Aberdeen. He was probably a monk prior to the Reformation. Bothwell granted him the prebend of St John the Evangelist in the Cathedral of St Magnus, and he was appointed Archdeacon of Orkney. He held the office of Commissioner of Shetland till 1580.^a In the accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578, he appears as "Master Gilbert Fowlsey," and his office is that of "Commissioner of Shetland." He was a married man, and his home was in Kirkwall, and as he was also Archdeacon of Orkney, it is unlikely that he devoted much of his time to

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney, Vol. 11. p. 40.



to the oversight of Shetland. At all events we have no record of his activities there.

The earliest date at which we find a minister settled in a Shetland parish of the Reformation Church is 1561. The majority, however, were appointed for the first time in 1567, and as in the case of Northmavine, they had probably all been priests in the pre-Reformation Church.

When we enter this period we find there is a tendency^e where possible to unite two or even three parishes under one minister, and to appoint one or more readers to assist him. In some cases readers instead of ministers were appointed to parishes. This policy was due to the difficulty of finding men whose character and education came up to the standards demanded by the Reformed Faith, and also to the fact that the revenue of the Church had been so ruthlessly cut down that even if sufficient ministers could have been obtained, it would have been impossible to pay them an adequate stipend. Thus we see that in the whole of Scotland in 1567 there were only 257 ministers as against 455 readers, and 151 exhorters, while even in 1574 there were only 289 ministers as against 715 readers.^a

In Shetland itself where there were seventeen parishes in the pre-Reformation Church, in this period there were only thirteen, while at the present time there are twenty-two parishes, besides a number of Home Mission stations.

As in the course of our survey of the various parishes in Shetland we shall have occasion to refer to Teinds, Thirds, stipends, benefices and the like, it will be advisable at this a. Rankin: The Church of Scotland Vol. 11. Book 111. p. 439.

point to discuss briefly the action taken by the Government at the inauguration of the Reformation, to deal with the revenues of the old Papal benefices.

An excellent account of the way in which the Crown dealt with the revenues of the Church from 1560 onwards down to the Revocation Edict of Charles¹. in 1625, is given in the introduction to the Register of the Privy Seal, Second Series, Volume 1, and it is from this that the following information has been taken.

It was claimed at first by the extremists of the new Church that all revenues should be transferred to the Protestant clergy, but the Council of Queen Mary in 1561 refused to do this, and it was decided that all the constituents of the old Papal benefices, such as mails, farms, teinds, rents, emoluments, profits and duties, should be taken together for yearly valuation and collection by Government officers, in order that exactly two-thirds of them should be retained by the old possessors during their lifetime, while the remaining one-third should be confiscated as a fund, partly for the casual needs of the Crown, and partly for the sustentation of the new National Kirk. Of this arrangement Knox spoke sarcastically, as "two-thirds to the devil, and one-third between God and devil." Yet it was this arrangement that held good during the rest of Queen Mary's reign, and nearly the whole of the reign of King James. The proportion of the Thirds assigned to the Protestant clergy for the first year of their services, ending with the crop of 1562, was £24,231:17:1 Scots. This gave the majority of the still small body of parish ministers a stipend of varying amounts up to one hundred merks each, and the rest somewhat higher

stipends up to three hundred merks. To each stipend a manse and a glebe was supposed to be added, though this was by no means done in every instance. It was at best a bare pittance. In Shetland, in the Highlands, and in other remote places, the clergy did not receive a stipend of even one hundred merks, indeed some of them received considerably less, and it was not till the Commission of 1617-18 that anything was done to augment the stipends of the Scottish clergy.

We now come to the consideration of the individual *parishes* of this period, and the ministers which served them. In this connection it may be advisable to point out that, as has already been stated in the Foreword, there are very few primary sources to which we can go for information about the parishes and ministers of the Church in Shetland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and especially is this true of this particular period. Many of those that were used by Dr Hew Scott the author of the *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, of which Volume III part 1 was published in 1870, have since disappeared, and the compilers of the latest edition of the *Fasti* have themselves had to depend to a great extent on the original edition, so far as Shetland is concerned.

The writer of this thesis has, wherever possible, based his accounts of the parishes and ministers of Shetland on the primary sources which are still available, but has been compelled owing to the scarcity of these, to use also the records of both the editions of the *Fasti*, as well as other secondary sources which he has found in the course of his research.

The parishes are taken in the order in which they appear in the last edition of the Fasti.

Bressay, Burra and Quarff. This parish consists of three former

 former pre-Reformation parishes, which were united sometime shortly after 1560. In the Island of Bressay there were three chapels, St John's at Kirkabister, St Olaf's at Gunnista, and the Kirk of Noss,^a while in the Island of Burra there was the Church of St Laurence with its round tower.^b

A certain John Makquhaill (Mackail) was appointed to this parish as reader in 1567.^c He was followed in 1576 by Alexander Porteous, another reader.^c We learn that his stipend was one-third of the vicarage £6; one-third of the Chaplainry of Asta £3:6:8,^d and one-third of St Michael's Stowk, £3:6:8, and a barrel of butter. He was succeeded by William Umphray in 1581, the first minister of the parish. He served the Church in Bressay for over half a century, and in 1637, near the end of his ministry, he bequeathed the interest on £100 Scots, and the rent of four merks land in Bressay for the maintenance of a reader and other pious purposes, and a little later in the year he made another bequest, viz:- the interest on £120 Scots, and the rent of eight merks udal land in Meall in Burra for the same purpose. The reason he gives for these bequests to the parish of Bressay is "the meanness and want of competent maintenance for serving the cure of the same."

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 279.

b. " " " p. 287.

c. " " " p. 279.

d. Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds, At Register House.

He lived to see Episcopacy set up in Shetland by James VI in 1605, and apparently accommodated himself to the new order of things. He is said to have retired from the parish in 1636, two years before the overthrow of Prelacy.^a

There is the name of another minister associated with this parish during this period, though it does not appear in the Fasti. It is that of Alexander Kincaid. We first hear of him when he was appointed mandatory by Bishop Adam Bothwell, for the induction of Alexander Spittell to the vicarage of Nesting in the year 1567.^b In the list of Parochial Benefices drawn up by Pitcairne early in the seventeenth century, it is stated that the vicarage of Bressay and Burra "is set be umquhil Alex. Kincaid to my Lord of Orkney for auchtein poundis."^c Finally, in an extract from the record of a Synodal meeting at Kirkwall 17th August 1592, appears the name of Alexander Kincaid, "pretendit vicar of Vauss, Brassay and Beuray." At this meeting he was^d deposed along with other Shetland ministers for non-residence. We can only conjecture that he was appointed to this parish prior to William Umphray, and that on his refusing to reside in the parish any longer (if he ever did reside in it) William Umphray was appointed in his place, and that finally in answer to his claim to be still the vicar of the parish, he was deposed by the Synod.

a. Fasti Vol. VII p. 279.

b. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p. 160

c. " " " " " " " p. 156.

d. Craven. History of the Church in Orkney Vol. II. p. 77.

Parish of Dunrossness and Fair Isle. These two parishes were

 united in the sixteenth century, and in 1600 or very soon after,
 Sandwick and Cunningsburgh were joined with them. Even before
 their union, however, these four parishes were often in the
 charge of one man. Goudie says in this connection "in 1567
 seven years after the legal establishment of the Reformation, the
 entire district from Quarff to Sumburgh Head, upwards of twelve
 miles in length, with Fair Isle twenty-five miles distant, was
 under the charge of a reader only." In the case of Cunningsburgh
 the people even ceased to have a place of worship, as the building
 fell into decay, and was also desecrated. The desecration became
 so notorious, that it came under the notice of the authorities,
 and on 7th July 1603 a court was held at Dunrossness, presided over
 by Mr John Dishington depute for Earl Patrick Stewart, and tried
 one David Leslie for misusing the kirk at Cunningsburgh by
 placing his goods in it, and using it for a cow byre. He was found
 guilty, and was ordered to make repentance on the next Sunday in
 sackcloth before the minister and whole congregation (presumably
 in the Dunrossness church) and to pay XLs to the King for his
 offence.^a

In 1561 the third of the benefice of Dunrossness was
 valued at £26:13:4 Scots,^b while in the Accounts of the
 collector General of Thirds 1578, the Thirds of Dunrossness
 Sandwick, Cunningsburgh, Cross Kirk, and Fair Isle, amount to £80,
 out of which the minister, Malcolme Sinclair, has to pay the readers
 as well as himself.

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p. 67-8.

b. Thirds of Benefices 1561, Register House, Edinburgh.

According to a minute in the Register of the Privy Seal, Walter Echline M.A; was presented to the vicarage on 14th June 1569 on the death of George Bellinden its previous holder.^a On the death of Echline it was presented to Alexander Thomson on 24th November 1570,^b and on his demission it was next presented to John Dynmune on 4th April 1574.^c We also find that David Sinclair, reader, was presented to the Altarage in the Cross Kirk of Dunrossness, rendered vacant by the decease of Oliver Robertson 20th March 1575.^d

In the Fasti it is stated that John Crabb was appointed reader in the Dunrossness parish in 1567, and that on his death in November 1571 he was followed by John Kingsone, or Kingstoun,^e but the source of this information is not given. Nevertheless, it is probable that these two were actually in charge of the parish during this period, and that the ministers were absentee vicars.

In 1575 Malcolm Sinclair of Quendale, reader, was presented to the vicarage of Dunrossness by James VI. He was made a Commissioner of Peace, 28th June 1609, and was also appointed a commissioner on 10th August 1614 to apprehend any rebels proceeding to Shetland after Robert Stewart's attempt to regain the earldom for his father. He died 6th January 1618, and was buried in Cross Kirkyard.^{e.}

a. Register of the Privy Seal 14th June 1569.

b. Registration of Presentations to Benefices Vol. 1 folio 48.

c. " " " " " " " " 104.

d. " " " " " " " " 127.

e. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 282.

The only names we have in connection with Sandwick and Cunningsburgh, apart from those already dealt with, are those of Adam Moodie, and Laurence Sinclair. Adam Moodie was translated from Walls and Flotta in 1580, and in addition to Sandwick and Cunningsburgh, he had charge of Cross Kirk of Dunrossness and Balista. Laurence Sinclair was appointed to Sandwick in 1585, and seems to have remained there, with interruptions, till after 1608. He had been a reader at Dunrossness from 1576 to 1580.^a

Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale. Tingwall itself was a prebend, ----- as we have seen, held by the Archdeacon of Zetland, and "in the sixteenth century the four parishes of Tingwall, Scalloway, Whiteness and Weisdale were all united."^b We find that the Bishop of Orkney sends to him formal intimation of a presentation of a benefice to a certain minister,^c as though he were recognised to be in charge of ecclesiastical affairs in Shetland, but how much authority he exercised in Shetland, and to what extent it was recognised, we cannot say.

In 1561 Jerome Cheyne, son of Sir Patrick Cheyne of Esslemont, became the minister of Tingwall.^d The Thirds of the benefice were valued at £80.^e

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 288-9.

b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 293.

c. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p. 147.

d. Fasti Vol. VII p. 290.

e. Thirds of Benefices, 1561. Register House.

On 16th March 1572 or 1573 Jerome Cheyne demitted the benefice in favour of his son, but notwithstanding, was still minister in 1580 and was reappointed Archdeacon in 1582. He died in 1584^a. He is called the "popish Archdeacon" in the New Statistical Account, where it is related that he made a mort of the Church lands of the Archdeanery to his Nephew Patrick Cheyne^b. This was ratified by a Crown Charter dated 29th April 1587. The reason for this gift to Patrick Cheyne is stated to be "his zeal in propagating the Gospel"^b. This is but an illustration of the method by which much of the property of the Church passed into the hands of the laity.

Thomas Cheyne, the son of Jerome Cheyne succeeded his father on 31st March 1572, when the living was presented to him by James VI^a. In 1574 he had also charge of Whiteness, Weisdale, Nesting, Whalsay and Skerries, as we learn from an entry in the Register of Ministers and Readers for that year, which reads, "Tingwall, Quhitnes, Woisdail, Nesting, Quhalsay, Skerries, Maister Thomas Hieronomie Chein, minister £80."^c On the death of his father in 1584 his presentation and collation were confirmed, somewhat belatedly by James VI, and in the same year he either died or retired^a.

In 1582 Robert Cheyne is mentioned as reader. It is thought that he was Robert Cheyne of Urie, ancestor of the Vaila family^a. His stipend was "to be payit forth of the Archdeanery, with the vicar's pensions, manse and glebe"^d. He was still reader in 1595^e.

William Hay, son of George Hay of Frenchnie succeeded Thomas Cheyne. He was presented to the benefice of James VI on 9th

- a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 290.
- b. The New Statistical Account of Scotland Vol XV. Shetland p.59.
- c. Woodrow's Miscellanies Vol. 1. p 331.
- d. Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578. Register House.
- e. " " " " " " " 1595. " "

September 1584, and also by Robert Earl of Orkney, and the presentation is finally ratified by the King 16th March 1585 or 1586. On 17th June 1628 he demitted the benefice on account of age and infirmity.^a In this presentation we have the interesting situation of the benefice being first of all presented by the Crown; then we have Earl Robert exercising his right as possessor of the temporalities of the See, and finally the Crown confirming the presentation. It might easily happen under these circumstances that more than one minister might be presented to a benefice at the same time, and this seems to be confirmed by the fact that at the Synodal meeting of 1592, already referred to, "Maister William Hay and Maister Alexander Cheine, ather of thame pretending rycht to the Archdeanrie of Zetland",^b were deposed for non-residence. Earl Robert was not the man to scruple about putting a man into a parish that was already filled, when there was money to be made out of it.

Several Shetland documents have been discovered in which the name of William Hay Archdeacon of Zetland^{appears}, viz:—a wadset dated 24th November 1597, two dispositions dated 17th April 1615, another dated 12th September 1616, a deed of excambion dated 10th August 1618, a disposition dated 22nd August 1618, a charter dated 27th August 1618, a charter dated 11th October 1625, a disposition dated 27th February 1626, and finally two charters^c dated respectively 9th July 1628, and 6th May 1637. This last appearance of his name shows that he was still alive nine years

a. Fasti Vol VII. p. 290.

b. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. II. p. 77.

c. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant

after his retirement.

Fetlar and North Yell. The island of Fetlar and North Yell in the

island of Yell were united into one charge at the Reformation.

William Lauder, chamberlain to Adam Bishop of Orkney, was presented to this benefice by the bishop on 30th April 1563. He demitted this parish before 14th October 1574, on being presented to that of Yell.^a "In that year he had also charge of Sandwick and Balzesta in Unst, and Hamnavoe and Reafirthness in Yell," and his stipend was £40.^b The Third of the benefice of Fetlar was £5:6:8.^c

Matthew Lister, reader at Tingwall,^b was presented to the vicarage of Fetlar 14th October 1574, on the promotion of William Lauder to the vicarage of Yell.^d

James Lauder, who was probably the son of William Lauder above, was minister in 1595, being also in charge of Yell. He removed in that or the following year to Yell, still having Fetlar in his ministry.^a

Peter Maxwell was translated from Walls and Sandness before 1599. He was still minister in 1601.^a

His successor was Patrick Hogg who was admitted before 15th August 1603, and was translated to Delting in 1615.^a

Unst, or Norwick, Balista and Lund. In the island of Unst previous

to the Reformation there were three parishes. The north of Unst formed the parish of Norwick, while Balista was the central parish,

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 295.

b. Woodrow's Miscellanies Vol. I. p. 331.

c. Thirds of Benefices 1561. Register House, Edinburgh.

d. Registration of Presentations to Benefices Vol. I. folio 110 and 114.

and the parish of Lund contained all the south of Unst, but soon after the beginning of the Reformation, they were united to form one parish.^a The Third of the vicarage of Unst was £40.^b

It is stated in the Fasti that William Taylor was reader in Unst from 1567 to 1574,^c but he was evidently a reader there for a longer period than that, for in the Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578 the following entry appears, "William Talyeour, reader at the Kirk of Unst, his stipend to be payit by the new providit vicar."^d The mistake is probably due to the fact that Scott was unaware of this entry, and could find no further trace of him after 1574, in which year the following entry appears in The Register of Ministers and Readers, "William Talzeour, reidare at the Kirkis of Unst, £20."^e

Francis Bothwell, Treasurer of Orkney, became vicar in 1568.^f

He was followed by James Hay, reader, son of George Hay of Frenchnie. He was presented to the vicarage by James VI on 31st October 1574.^g In the Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578 we find this entry, "Unst, Sandwick, Ballista, Croce Kirk, James Hay minister his stipend hail vicarage of Unst whereunto he is new providit, sustaining his own readers, extending to £120."^d

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 297-8.

b. Thirds of Benefices 1561. Register House, Edinburgh.

c. Fasti Vol. VII p. 298.

d. Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds, 1578. Register House.

e. Woodrow's Miscellanies Vol. I. p. 332.

f. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 298.

g. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 298.

He was one of the ministers deposed by the Synod of Orkney and Shetland in 1592, for non-residence.^a

There was also a James Niltar, a reader, who "had a designation of a glebe of four acres from lands of Voesgarth ^{circa} ~~about~~ ^{" b} 1591.

Magnus or Man~~ns~~ Norsk succeeded James Hay sometime before 1593. Scott says, "Magnus Norsk went to Norway to learn the Norse language in order to qualify himself for preaching to Zetlanders, who at that time understood no other."^c The compilers of the revised edition of the Fasti repeat this statement, qualifying it by saying, "Magnus Norsk is said to have gone" etc.^d His name, however, strongly suggests that he was a Norwegian, and Sir Francis Grant's conjecture that Norsk was "probably a native of Norway, which he visited from time to time,"^e is most likely to be right. The statements in the Fasti, however, whether correct or not, do bear testimony to the fact that there was a tradition that only Norse was spoken by the Shetlanders up to the last decade of the sixteenth century at least.

In 1599 Norsk witnessed a disposition by David Sinclair of Hunts to his son-in-law, James Strang of Voesgarth, of a last of land in Melby. In this deed he signed himself "Man~~ss~~ Norsk." He owned the lands of North Sandel, Norwick, and Hugea. It is said he intended giving his lands to his eldest son, but his youngest son on learning of this, declared he would not contribute to the support of his father in his old age, if he did not give him a share of his

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. 11. p. 77.

b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 298.

c. Hew Scott: Fasti Volume 111. Part 1. p. 441.

d. Fasti Vol. VII p. 298.

e. Grant: The County Families of the Zetland Islands. p. 226.

property. Accordingly the lands in North Sandel, Norwick, Unst, were given to him, and those of Huga to the eldest. His second son continued to live with him, and when an attempt was made to deprive his father of his living-the reason for which is not given-he endeavoured to keep possession until driven out by a military force. He then escaped by a back window, and fled to his brother in Huga, who also came to render assistance, but found the soldiers gone.^a Norsk retained his benefice till 1632, in which year he died.^a

Mid Yell or Reafirth. "In the sixteenth century this parish and -----^b South Yell were united."

Scott says "The parish was supplied by John Fallowsdail, reader from 1567 to 1574",^c but gives no authority for his statement, while in the revised edition of the Fasti he is described as "vicar and reader from 1562 to 1574."^d In the Register of Ministers and Readers for 1574 we find the entry "James Fallousdail, reidare at the Kirkis of Zell £20."^e It will be noted that the christian name ~~James~~ is "John" in the first instance, and "James" in the second, but there can be no doubt that in both cases the same person is meant.

He was succeeded by William Lauder in 1575, who had been translated from Fetlar prior to that year. He is^f mentioned in proceedings against Laurence Bruce of Cultemalindie as vicar in 1575.^f In the Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 298.

b. " " " p. 301.

c. Hew Scott: Fasti Vol. III. Part. I. p. 433.

d. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 301.

e. Woodrow's Miscellanies Vol. I p. 332.

f. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 302.

appears the following entry, "Rayfurd and Ness in Yell, Maister Wm Lauder minister (old St Olave's) stipend the one-third of the vicarage of Yell £40."^a Matthew Litster also appears in this Account as "reader at Yell, the hail vicarage of Fetlar newly disponit to him £16." We have seen already that he was at Fetlar in 1574.

Magnus Norsk was appointed minister in 1586 and translated to Unst before 1593.^b

He was succeeded by Andrew Edmondston, who before becoming a minister had been a notary. He went to Shetland a little after 1590, and was admitted minister of the parish before 24th November 1597. He "acquired the lands of Hascosay and Gravaland", and "had also charge of Fetlar in 1621."^c He died before 1632. He appears as a witness in several Shetland documents. The first is a wadset, already referred to in connection with William Hay, Archdeacon of Shetland, dated 24th November 1597. He next appears as a witness in letters of Reversion dated 21st August 1598; also in a disposition dated 7th June 1600, and in a charter dated 17th June 1600. Then in a document dated 7th June 1605, which he witnesses, he is described as "a minister of God's Word." Finally he appears as one of the parties in a Charter of Excambion. It is between Walter Scott of Whiteness, and Breta Spence his spouse on the one part, and Mr Andrew Edmondston of Hamnavoe, minister at Yell, with

a. Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578. Register House.
 b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 302
 c. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 302.
 d. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

consent of Margaret Kintore his spouse, on the other part, and is dated 24th January 1619.^a

Delting, Olnafirth and Laxavoe. "These three parishes were
-----^b
united in the sixteenth century."

In 1567 Matthew Litster was appointed reader in this parish.^c
As we have seen he subsequently ministered in Tingwall, Fetlar and Yell.

On 23rd March 1573 John Denoon (Dynnune, Dunnune, Dunune) was presented to the vicarage by James VI, and also to the vicarage of Dunrossness, 5th April 1574.^d

In the Register of Ministers and Readers for the year 1574 we find the following entry, "Delting, Scatistay, Foula, Waus, Sandnes, Papa, Johne Dunune, minister (to uphold ane reidare) £80.

William Philp, reidare at the said Kirkis £20,"^e
and in the Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578 we find, "Delting, Scatsta, Foula, Waes, Sandsting, and Papa, Johnne Dunnune, minister, stipend £80 (vicarage of Delting £60; 2½ barrells of butter)^f
out of which stipend to uphold reader at Scatsta and Delting."

John Edie (Adie) is known to have been the minister in 1593, and was still minister in 1601,^g but there is no record of the dates of his admission to the parish and demission.

a. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 306.

c. " " " p. 306.

d. " " " p. 306.

e. Woodrow's Miscellanies Vol. p. 331.

f. Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578. Register House.

g. Fasti. Vol. VII. p. 306.

In a charter dated 9th July 1597 Mr John Adie, minister at Delting,^a appears as a witness.

Gilbert Mowat, M.A., was admitted to the parish before 28th July 1605, and demitted it on "10th April 1615 in favour of his successor."^b He was "translated to Northmavine soon afterwards," and we shall have occasion to speak of him more fully in connection with his ministry there. In a charter by alienation and vendition by John Mowat of Hugoland, Mr Gilbert Mowat of Garthe, minister at Delting receives from his brother land in East Hugoland, and other lands in the parish of Northmaven. The deed is dated at Ollaberry 1st August 1613.^c Nesting and Lunnasting. "In the sixteenth century the parishes -----^d of Nesting, Lunnasting and Whalsay were all united." Scott says, "The parish was supplied by George Duff, reader from 1567 to 1578,"^e but gives no authority for this statement, while the revised edition of the Fasti states that Sir George Strang was "vicar in 1567, George Duff, reader, 1567-78," and "Gavin Watt, reader in 1567,"^f without giving the sources of this information.

Gavin Watt is said to have been a pre-Reformation priest who conformed and was a reader in the parish of Tankerness and Deerness before being appointed to Nesting and Lunnasting,^g

a. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

b. Fasti. Vol. VII. p. 306.

c. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

d. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 309.

e. Hew Scott: Fasti Vol. III. Part 1. p. 437.

f. Fasti. Vol VII. p. 309.

g. Fasti. Vol. VII. p. 210.

and the only reference to Sir George Strang we can discover, apart from the bare statement ~~statement~~ in the Fasti, is that found in the deed of presentation to his successor, which makes mention of his death, but does not state when it occurred.

The name of George Duff is found in the Register of Ministers and Readers ~~f~~^a for the year 1574. The entry there reads, "George Duff reidare at Nesting, Quhalsay and Skerries, £20." His name also appears in the Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578. The entry is as follows:- George Duff, reader at Nesting Whalsay and Skerries, his stipend £20 to be payit forth of Third of the vicarage of Nesting with the vicar's manse and glebe if any be.^b

The successor to Sir George Strang was Alexander Spittal (Spittell) the son of Alexander Spittall of Blairlogy. He was presented to the vicarage by Adam Bothwell, Bishop of Orkney. His name is found in the revised edition of the Fasti,^c but not in Scott's edition.

The original deed of presentation was discovered by Goudie in 1873, among a bundle of old deeds in the Sheriff's office, Lerwick, the nature of which was unknown up to that time. It is an interesting example of an ecclesiastical document of this period. It is in Latin, and as translated by Goudie, reads as follows:-

" Adam, by the Divine mercy, bishop of Orkney and Zetland
a. Woodrow's Miscellanies Vol. 1 p. 331.

b. Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578. Register House.

c. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 309.

to the archdean of our church of Zetland, or any other vicar of the same, wheresoever constituted within our diocese of Zetland, with Divine benediction: Whereas the vicarage of Nesting and Quhilsay in Zetland, situated within our church of Zetland, now vacant by the death or decease of sometime Sir George Strang, last vicar and possessor of the same, belonging to our presentation in full right, we have provided and conferred, as by the tenor of these presents we do confer, to a discreet man, Alexander Kyncaid, conjunctly and severally, procurator, and in name of Alexander Spittell, son of Alexander Spittell of Blairlogy, absent as present, by placing our ring on the finger of the said Alexander Kyncaid, fully committing the cure, government, and administration of the same to the said Alexander: To you, therefore, and each of you, we give in charge, straitly enjoining you in virtue of holy obedience, and under the penalties prescribed by the laws, that ye forthwith induct and invest the said Alexander Spittell, or for him, his lawful procurator, into the real, actual, and corporal possession of the said vicarage of Nesting, and Quhilsay respectively now vacant, according to the custom; firmly restraining gainsayers or rebels, if haply there be any such, by the ordinary authority. In faith and testimony of which, all and sundry the premises, we have commanded and caused these our present letters of collation, or this present public instrument, written by a notary public, to be confirmed by the hanging to of our seal: Given under our subscription manual, at Edinburgh, the 20th day of May, in the year of the Lord, a thousand five hundred sixty seven, and of our inauguration the

ninth year,

Adam,

Bishop of Orkney and Zetland."^a

There is little need to comment on this deed of presentation, as it speaks for itself. It shows that seven years after the Reformation had been set up in Shetland, the church government there was completely prelatical, and that all the old terms of the pre-Reformation Church were in full use.

Alexander Spittall was one of the Shetland vicars formally deposed by the Synod of 1592 for non-residence,^b but in spite of this he seems to have retained his living till his death in 1601.^c

Peter Simson who succeeded him had been reader in the parish from 1579 to 1589. He was presented to the vicarage by Earl Patrick shortly before 10th July 1601.^c

Northmavine and Ollaberry. These parishes were united in the
-----d-----
sixteenth century.

John Gifford was a reader in this parish in 1567. He is said to have been a son of John Gifford of Sheriffhall, Midlothian. His stipend for serving St Colm's Kirk, Cross Kirk and Ollaberry was a Third of the vicarage amounting to £20, together with a barrell of butter out of the Umboth duties or bishop's rents of the parish.^e In 1574 he is designated minister, as we see from the following entry in the Register of Ministers and Readers for that year. "Colmis Kirk, Croce Kirk, Olaberrie in North Mawin, Johne

Giffurd, minister."^f In the Fasti he is stated to have been

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland p.147.

b. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol.11.p.77.

c. Fasti. Vol.VII.p.309.

d. Fasti. Vol.VII.p.312.

e. Grant: The County Families of the Zetland Islands.p.81.

f. Woodrow's Miscellanies Vol.1.p.331.

"originally a Roman Catholic and probably a priest," and to have
 "died before 10th July 1577."^a

He was succeeded by Alexander Lawson, reader, who was
 presented to the vicarage 11th July 1577.^b

In 1578 Peter Maxwell was minister of the parish, and
 was transferred to Sandsting in 1579.^a

He was succeeded by James Pitcairn or Pitcairne, of whom
 we know more than we do of any other minister of this period.
 He is said to be the son of Pitcairn of Huitbauch and Gallowayskild.
 He became a reader and was presented to the vicarage by James VI
 10th June and 19th November 1578, and was admitted to the parish
 in 1579. Ten years later he appeared before the Privy Council
 in Edinburgh, 2nd June 1589, and there produced a copy of King's
 letters dated at Holyroodhouse 22nd January last, by which he
 had been summoned, at the instance of the parishioners of
 Northmavine in Zetland, and of Johnne Mowatt, son of Andro Mowatt
 of Hugoland, underfoude of Northmavine, to appear before the
 Council on 17th June last to answer a complaint of the said
 parishioners of "troubling and oppressing of thame throw his
 avaricious and undecent behaviour, evill lyffe and conversatioun."
 His pursuers, however, had not appeared on the date fixed, to
 sustain their charges. He, accordingly, protested against being
 held to answer in the said matter, till he was again summoned
 a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 312.

b. Register of Presentations to Benefices Vol. I. folio 143, 148, 152.

and his expenses refunded. His protest was upheld, and the Privy Council evidently of opinion that it was no business of theirs, also decided "that the caussis of the said complaint aucht first to be cognoscit be the Generall Assembly, or uthers havand^a commissioun in ecclesiasticall caussis."

There could have been little or nothing in the charges, for they were dropped altogether, and in 1606 he was nominated Constant Moderator of the Presbytery by the General Assembly, and on 17th January following, the Presbytery was charged by the Privy Council to receive him as such within twenty-four hours of notice under pain of rebellion.^b

The office of Constant Moderator had been agreed to by the Linlithgow Convention of 1606, but met with much opposition thereafter, for it was fully realized that the creation of this office had not sprung from a desire to suppress Popery, as alleged, but had as its objective the furtherance of the interests of Episcopacy.^c There is no evidence, however, that it met with opposition in Shetland.

Brand in his description of the Castle of Scalloway relates an incident connected with Pitcairn, which shows that the minister of Northmavine had the courage of his convictions. We give it in full.

"At the east or south-east end of the town stands the Castle of Scalloway built in 1600 by Patrick Earl of Orkney, son to Robert Stewart also Earl of Orkney, who built the Palace

a. Register of the Privy Council Vol. 1V p. 400.

b. " " " " " Vol. VII. p. 282.

c. Rankin: The Church of Scotland Vol. 11. Book 111. p. 481.

of Birsa formerly mentioned; above the gate as we enter into the house there is this inscription, 'Patricius Orchadiae Zetlandiae comes,' and below the inscription this distich, 'Cuius fundamen saxum est, domus illa manebit; Labius e contra si sit arena, perit;' 'That house whose foundation is on a rock shall stand, but if on the sand it shall fall.' The reason of the inscription is reported to be this, the Earl greatly oppressed both Orkney and Zetland, and particularly at the building of this house, his hand lay very heavy on the poor people by causing them in great numbers to be employed about the building, which could not but divert them from their ordinary work, as fishing etc, whereby they provided substance for themselves and family. After this one Mr Pitcairn minister of North-Mewan, said to be a godly and zealous man, coming to pay his respects to the Earl, the Earl desired him to compose a verse which he might put upon the frontispiece of his house; from this the minister took occasion to lay before the Earl his great sin of oppression, upon which the Earl's anger was incensed, and he threatened him with imprisonment. However the Earl afterwards coming to some composure of spirit; Mr Pitcairn said, 'well, if you will have a verse, I shall give you one from express words of holy scripture Luke 6; which verse the Earl being pleased with caused inscribe it on the lintle above the gate, with Luke 6 added to the verse, the minister thereby insinuating that this house could not stand long, having such a sandy foundation as oppression, as indeed neither did it, for shortly after the Earl being being beheaded, the house was not taken care of and is now become ruinous."

a. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney Zetland etc p.135-6.

Earl Patrick's complacent acceptance of the proposed inscription with its veiled insinuation, is somewhat surprising, but is explained by the fact that he put a literal interpretation upon the verse. "My father," he said, "built his house at Sumburgh upon the sand, and it has given way already, but this of mine I have built upon the rocks and it shall endure."^a

As has already been stated it was Pitcairn who drew up a list of the parishes of Shetland with the heading "The Just Rentelis of the Benefices callit the Vicarages with the Number of the Kirkis Pertening thairto as they have beine of old and as they are now callit in Prebentis." It is the earliest Shetland document of its kind and of great importance. We have already had occasion to use it in connection with the pre-Reformation Church, and will require to use it again in the next chapter.

Pitcairn died in 1612. He was evidently a shrewd business man and a good farmer, as well as a courageous minister. From an inventory of his estate, we find that he made the most of his lands and left a considerable estate. His stock comprised sixteen horses, nineteen mares; fifty oxen, fifty-six cows, a number of steers and heifers, and six hundred and sixty-two sheep and lambs. He also had twenty barrels of oats, seven barrels of beer, and six barrels of malt. There is also an inventory of his silver plate and household utensils, and his books are valued at £66:13:4. The total value of his estate is estimated to be £2868:13:4 Scots.^b

a. Catton: History and Description of the Shetland Islands p.82.

b. Hew Scott: Fasti Vol. lll. Part. l. p. 439. 440

Sandsting and Aithsting.

"These parishes were

-----^a
united in the sixteenth century.

In 1561 the Third of the vicarage of Aithsting is set
down at £8:17:9 $\frac{1}{2}$.^b

William Watson was reader in the parish in 1567.^a In the
Register of Ministers and Readers for the year 1574 we find the
following entry, "Sandsting, Aithsting. William Watsoun, minister
£26:17:9 $\frac{1}{2}$."^c He was still there in 1578, as we see from an entry
in the Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds of that year.
It reads, "Sandsting and Aithsting. William Watson his stipend
£26:17:9 $\frac{1}{2}$ (one-third of the vicarage of Sandsting and Aithsting
£8:17:9 $\frac{1}{2}$) and three barrels of oil from the Third of the bishopric
with vicar's manse and glebe."^d

Peter Maxwell was translated from Northmavine in 1579
to Sandsting and Aithsting, and from there translated to Sandness
before 1585.^a

John Sutherland succeeded him as minister in 1585. He
was afterwards reader and continued in that office in 1608. He
was still alive in 1642.^a

In a wadset previously mentioned, dated 24th November
1597, he appears as a witness, and is designated "John Sutherland
vicar of Sandsting and Aithsting."^e His name is also found as

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 314.

b. Thirds of Benefices 1561. Register House Edinburgh.

c. Woodrow's Miscellanies Vol. I. p. 331.

d. Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds, 1578. Register House.

e. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

a witness in a sasine dated 8th July 1616. There he is styled
 "Mr John Sutherland minister at Aithsting."^a

In the Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1595
 the name of John Porteous, reader, occurs.^b

Walls, Sandness, Papa Stour and Foula. "These four parishes
 -----^c
 were united in the sixteenth century."

In the Thirds of Benefices for 1561, the Third of the
 vicarage of Walls is set down at £20.^d

Magnus Murray was vicar in 1564.^e

Scott does not mention Murray, but says "The parish was
 supplied by William Philpe, reader, in 1567, who probably
 continued in 1574."^d "This statement is repeated simpliciter in the
 revised edition of the Fasti, though the name is spelt "Philp"
 instead of "Philpe".^c We know now, however, that he was not only at
 Walls in 1574, but that he was still there in 1578. His name
 appears in the Register of Ministers and Readers for the year
 1574. The entry, which we have cited in another connection, reads
 as follows:- Delting, Scatistay, Foula, Waus, Sandnes, Papa. Johne
 Dunune, minister (to uphold ane reidare £80. William Philp reidare
 at the said kirkis £20)."^e Then in the Accounts of the Collector
 General of Thirds 1578 we find the following entry, "William
 Philp, reader at the said Kirk, Waws, Foula, Sandness and Papa,

a. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

b. Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds, 1595. Register House.

c. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 317.

d. Hew Scott: Fasti Vol. III. Part 1. 431.

e. Woodrow's Miscellanies. Vol. 1. p. 331.

his stipend £20 equals one-third of vicarage of Walls £10, and for the rest, boll of oil; half barrel of butter.^a"

In 1585 Peter Maxwell was "translated from Sandsting, having charge of Sandness, Papa, Foula and Walls.^b" He was subsequently transferred to Fetlar prior to 1599.

As to the religious and moral life of the people of Shetland during this period, we can say very little. There are no local church records of any kind to throw light on these times, for the records go no further back than the end of the seventeenth century. With the exception of Pitcairn, the ministers are but names, and have left behind them no record of their work.

Whatever general evidence there is, however, gives one the impression that the religious and moral life of the community was at a low ebb.

The unscrupulous oppression of the Earls of Orkney, Robert and Patrick Stewart, did not commend the new Faith which they championed. The ministers and readers for the most part were still priests at heart, and content to render lipservice to the Reformed Faith, so long as they were allowed to keep their livings. There were no preachers like Knox and Melville in the Islands to rouse the conscience of the people, and fill them with enthusiasm for the great Christian truths as re-discovered in the Gospel. How low was the moral standard may be judged from the fact that in one year alone six hundred persons were found guilty of incest, adultery and fornication. (vide p.21.)

a. Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds 1578. Register House.

b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 317.

Superstition also had a strong hold on the people, a superstition that had its roots, not only in the errors of the pre-Reformation Church, but also in the paganism that preceded it.

It is evident that the Synod of 1592, already referred to, which had deposed several Shetland ministers for non-residence, had also reported to the Assembly on the unsatisfactory state of the Church in Orkney and Shetland, especially in regard to the pluralities that existed there, and their consequent evils, for we find the following minute in the records of the General Assembly of April 1593:-

"Acta sessionis quinti vigesimo sexto Aprilis 1593: Anent the kirkis in Orknay and Zetland In respect it is considerit that for the nombre of Isles, and that thair is not stipend to everie particular kirk whereby the pluralitie of kirkis serving may be eschewit, Thairfor the Kirk till the next Assembly ordainis the saidis kirkis to be servit as they are presentlie in respect of the present neidcessitie and diverse utheris impediments."^a

a. MS Record of the Minutes of the General Assembly: Church of Scotland Library, Edinburgh.

Chapter IV.

Episcopacy in Shetland 1605-1638.

Although Episcopacy was not finally established in Scotland till 1610, and the consecration of the bishops not confirmed till 1617, yet for all practical purposes it may be said to have been set up in Orkney and Shetland with the appointment of James Law as bishop of this see in 1605.

The Church in Shetland was too far away to be affected by the crises in Scotland, which preceded the establishment of Episcopacy there, and moreover the Church in Shetland had been more or less prelatiical since the Reformation, and even after the Presbytery of Tingwall was constituted a little prior to 1592, hardly any change seems to have taken place in the polity of the Church there.

When Bishop Law entered on his new office, Earl Patrick was at the height of his power and all attempts to curb him or remove him, had so far failed. The hostility to his unjust rule, however, was steadily growing, and even the Earl's friends were warning him of the risks he ran through his tyrannical conduct. In a letter dated 9th April 1605, the year in which Law entered on his bishopric, Sir John Arnot wrote to the Earl as follows:-

"It grieves me very meikle, and peircis my hairt to hear your L. name bladdit out at the market croice, as it is, for even when I was wryting this letter your L. is charged at the Gudeman of Ethays instance, to compair before the Council the 7th day of Junii or thereabout, to answer to his complaints. There is as

many complaints made upon your L(and yet habile without caus)
 that your L.name is made odious to all the people of this country,
 baith great and small, every one ready to hem to their own evil
 word as occasion serves. Thomas Swinton, James Annand and James
 Crawford, can **show** your L.enough heirof gif they please. I am
 feirit that it sall move his Majesty to extreme anger against
 your L.for his Highness is of another kind of disposition nor
 he has been in Scotland quhen he was hier.^a"

In the meantime the Bishop and the Earl watched one another
 closely, each waiting for an opportunity to get the better of the
 other. At last they made a compromise by which the Bishop agreed
 to leave the lands and revenues of the see during his life with
 the Earl, the Earl on his part agreeing to give the Bishop an
 annuity, and the "Newark in the Yards" as a palace. This
 arrangement, however, soon fell through.^b

On 17th November 1608 Bishop Law wrote a letter to the
 King in which he describes the deplorable state of affairs in
 Orkney and Shetland, in the course of which he says, "Alas! dear
 and dread sovereign, truly it is to be pitied, that so many of
 your Majesty's subjects are so manifestly and grievously oppressed
 some by ejection and banishment from their houses and native
 soils, others by contorting the laws, and extorting their goods,
 the most part being so impoverished that some of them neither
 dare nor may complain, but in silent and forc'd patience groan
 under their grievances as hopeless of help; others are compelled

a. Peterkin: Notes on Orkney and Zetland. Appendix p.58-9.

b. Peterkin: " " " " " p.45-6.

with great trouble,danger,and damage to their poor persons and estates,to seek remedy through ordinary justice,which, when they have obtained,they must nevertheless,through proud contempt and lack of execution,either thus molest your Majesty,as the only strength and stay of their hopes under God, or else be utterly disappointed and lose all.

The bearer can and will inform and qualify the particulars; and I,who am able at this time to do them no other good,nor comfort,and has so long and earnestly been solicited by them,do now prostrate myself at your Majesty's feet in their behalf,- not in humble ambition,nor in covered covetousness,intending and aiming by the correction of that Nobleman to seek the erection of my base estate and poor fortune,but once to acquit myself of that duty,which,as I think,God,my conscience,my calling,your Majesty's favours toward me,and the fidelity of my bounden service does require at my hands,being as ready to retire myself to my former private condition if it shall not displease your Majesty,as I have and shall be most willing and obedient to go forward against all dangers and difficulties in discharging my unworthy service here or there,where it shall please your Majesty to command.^a"

This letter and the complaint of the people themselves to Parliament,brought matters to a head,and Earl Patrick Stewart was summoned to Edinburgh,arrested and lodged in the Castle of Edinburgh in July 1609. For over five years he was in custody,and was at length tried and found guilty,and executed

a.Peterkin:Notes on Orkney and Zetland. Appendix p.59-60.

on 6th January 1615 at the Market Cross, Edinburgh, and a month later his son Robert shared the same fate for his attempt to help his father, by seizing the Castle and Cathedral in Kirkwall, and defying the forces of the Crown.

In 1614 the Crown property was leased to Sir James Grant of Ochiltree, but he showed himself to be little better than his predecessor, and on account of his oppressions, the lease was cancelled.

In 1624 Sir George Hay was appointed Farmer-General and Steward of the Islands, but he too oppressed the unfortunate Shetlands, and the Lordship was again annexed to the Crown by Act of Parliament.

In the reign of Charles 1 the Earl of Morton was given a lease of the Lordship of Shetland and Earldom of Orkney for the sum of £30,000, which he is said to have advanced previously to his Majesty.

James Law, who brought about the fall of Earl Patrick Stewart, was born about 1561, and was the son of John Law of Spittal near Dunfermline, sometimes designed "the portioner of Lathirsk," and Margaret Strang of the Balcaskie family. He was educated at the University of St Andrews, and took his M.A; degree in 1581. He was ordained, and inducted to the parish of Kirkliston in 1585. It was while he was here, that he, along with John Spottiswoode, afterwards Archbishop, was rebuked by the Synod of Lothian for playing football on Sunday. In 1601 he was appointed a royal chaplain, and on 28th February 1605 he was promoted to the see of Orkney.^a On the 13th February 1605, Queen Anne with the consent
a.Fasti Vol.VII. p.322.

of her husband, had resigned in favour of Bishop Law "the spirituality and temporality of the Bishoprick of Orkney and haill rents and Dutys thereof for ever, to the effect the said Bishop and his successors may peaceably intromit with, joys and use and dispo^ane the same as his proper patrimony of the said bishopric."

Law was made moderator of the Assembly 26th July 1608, but he was not consecrated Bishop of Orkney till 1611.

It was after his consecration that he set about restoring order in his diocese. He called upon all the clergy to produce their "presentations, admissions, rights and tittels" to their benefices. This they did at once, "with all hum^aility and reverence as appertaines," and by their "owen deliberate willis resignet and demitted in the hands of the said James Bishope of Orkney all and sindrie presentations admissions, collations made to us at ance tyme bygane." ^b

In 1612 he next proceeded to Shetland, where in addition to his ecclesiastical function, he held Courts regulating the "police of the district, with the consent of the gentlemen and commons." ^c

On 20th July 1615 he was appointed to the Archbishopric of Glasgow, and installed in August or September of that year. He died 12th November 1632, and was buried in his cathedral. His widow erected a monument to his memory the inscription of a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. 11. p. 91.

b. " " " " " " " Vol. 11. p. 104

c. " " " " " " " Vol. 11. p. 106-7.

which, according to Monteith's translation reads:-

"Archbishop La^a, here in a homely dress,
 Was truly more than what words can express.
 Witness his acts at Orkney, and beside
 His grand memoirs left on bank of Clyde,
 The college rents, the schools, the hospitals,
 The leaden covert 'bove the Church's walls,
 Of this great man such monuments fair be,
 As will forbid his noble name to die.
 A good and spotless age did him attend
 Worthy a prelate to his blessed end."

Craven says of Law, "He showed himself to be a man brave, fearless and just; as a subject devoted to the service of his king; as a Bishop, paternal, never ceasing in labours for his spiritual children."^b

We have already referred to the fact that Law in 1614 made an excambion with the Crown of the scattered Bishopric Lands in Orkney and Shetland for Crown property situated almost wholly in one parish in Orkney.

Let us now look more closely at this exchange, for it was much more than the mere exchange of property.

Bishop Law with the consent of his Chapter disposed and resigned to the Crown "all their ecclesiastical lands and possessions in Orkney and Zetland, with all rights and securities belonging thereto to be incorporate and united to the Crown
 a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 322.

b. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. II. p. 112.

forever, and the King gives back and disposes to the bishop as much lands and tythes in Orkney as his Majesty judged a sufficient patrimony to the Bishop of Orkney and Zetland to be possessed and enjoyed by him and his successors in all time coming: the King also disposed to the bishop and his successors the right of patronage to present to all the vicarages of Orkney and Zetland with power to them to present qualified ministers as often as the kirks become vacant, disposing also to them the heritable and perpetual right of jurisdiction of sheriff and baillie within the lands and patrimony of the bishopric, excerning all possessors thereof in all causes, civil and criminal from the jurisdiction of the Sheriff and Steward of the earldom together also with the Commissarist of Orkney and Zetland, ~~together~~ with power to constitute and ordain commissars, clerks and other members of the Court." This contract also contained other Church privileges and benefices to ministers, and was later "ratified and confirmed by act of Parliament called the Act of Platt, whereby all the ministers of Orkney and Zetland were provided to stipends, which continue so still."^a

It will thus be seen that this excambion besides putting an end to the never-ceasing disputes over the boundaries between the Earldom and Bishopric lands, also gave the Church complete control of its own affairs within the Bishopric, and provided the ministers with a more adequate and assured stipend. In this matter of stipend, Craven gives the credit for the improvement to Bishop Grahame. He says "Meanwhile the new Bishop (Grahame) a. Gifford: Historical Description of Zetland p. 30-1. 29-30

was not forgetful of his duty towards Orkney. On 22nd November 1615 an Act or Deed of Provision was obtained by him from the Commissioners of His Majesty's rents by which a definite provision and stipend was settled upon the churches." ^a

This, however, cannot mean any^{more} than that Bishop Grahame saw to it that the provisions in the contract of excambion with regard to stipend were carried into effect.

Finally in 1617-18 an Act was passed whereby the minister's stipend was to be paid regularly, the last year's to be paid in the ensuing year at Whitsunday. ^b

There is no record of any protest in Shetland against the establishment of Episcopacy, and Craven holds there is no reason to believe that one single cleric in the diocese at this time held Puritan notions, and there is certainly no evidence of any minister having been ousted from his parish for refusing to conform to Episcopacy.

On the translation of Bishop Law to Glasgow in 1615, George Grahame was appointed to the Bishopric. He was the second son of George Grahame of Inchbraikie, and Marjory daughter of Andrew Rollo of Duncrub. He was educated at the University of St Andrews, taking his M.A. degree in 1587. In 1589 he was ordained and inducted into the parish of Clunie. From there he was translated to Auchtergaven before 1595, and then to Scone in 1601. In February 1603 he was made Bishop of Dunblane, while still retaining the living of Scone. He was appointed to the

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. 11. p. 123.

b. Register of the Privy Council Vol XI p. 333.

Bishopric of Orkney 26th August 1615, and was installed in the following year. He remained in office until 1638, when he was deposed by the Glasgow Assembly on 11th December. On 11th February 1639 he disclaimed Episcopacy and was allowed to retain his estate of Gorthie in Perthshire, and others in Orkney. He retired to Edinburgh, and died before 19th December 1643.^a

Within a month of Bishop Grahame's installation, and before he had actually arrived in the Islands, a Head Court was held in the Palace of the Yards at Kirkwall by Stewart and Livingston the Sheriff Deputies. The summoning of this court is at once a witness to the dissatisfaction of the local authorities with the condition of affairs both in state and church, to their hope for better things with the appointment of the new bishop, and to their willingness to help to bring about an improvement in the civil and spiritual state of the land. Towards this end eighteen acts in all were passed, which were to apply to Zetland as well as Orkney. The reasons for the passing of these acts are given in the minutes of the court, and are a striking commentary on the political and religious life of the community at this period. We quote from Craven:-

"Forasmeikle as sinne and iniquitie is and hes bein the caus of Godis heavie plagues and judgments and the caus of great desolatioun in kirk and policie within this countrey for lack of discipline and putting of the actis of the kirk quhilk hes bein meikle ~~com~~plainit in tymes past to dew executioun and sichlyk, that thair hes bein great ignorance of his Sacred
a. Fasti Vol.Vll. p.353.

Majestie's royal and supreme authoritie in practising of forren and uncouth laws, contrair to the Actis of Parliament and Secreit Counsaill maid thairanent and likewayes that thair hes bein great desolatioun in the common weill, truble, disordour, injuries, and wrangis amangst the inhabitantis of the land for the lack of government, administratioun of justice, and putting of the same to dew executioun. Thairfoir it is statuit and ordainit be the saidis Shirref deputis with advys and consent of the gentlemen suitteris of court and commonis all with ane advys, consent and assent as efter followes.

(1) Anent the putting of the Actis of the Kirk to executioun In the first it is statuit and ordainit, for punishing of sinne and vyce that the Actis of the Kirk agains transgressouris and sinneris be put to dew executioun, with all rigour in example to utheris to do the lyk, and to this effect, that the baillie of ilk parochin and his officar concur and asist thair ministeris, elderis and thair officaris in putting of all such Actis and statutis maid or to be maid in thair mainternance of Godis worship, keeping of the Sondayes, suppressing of all idolatrie, speciallie of walkis and pilgrimages, and all utheris vyces under the pain of deprivation and judgment of fourtie pundis to be employed ad prius usus.

(3) Anent the cairful directing of the corse(cross) Item, it is statuit and ordainit to the effect aforesaid that ilk hous and familie sall carefullie and diligently direct the corse according to the order and custome to his next nichtbour with ane sufficient bearer for admonishing the people, ather to conveyin

to kirk, to preaching, and prayers, or for his Majestie's service and sick uther necessar causis as salbe thocht expedient be the Minister, Shirreffes and Justiciaris or thair baillies, and sall not stay nor lay down the samens, but direct it with all diligence upon the recept thairof under the pain of sax pundis money toties quoties.^a"

We are not enlightened as to what the plagues were, to which the preamble refers, but probably they summed up all the miseries endured by the people under the tyrannical rule of Earl Patrick, together with some special disaster in the shape of famine or pestilence.

The Court is of opinion that the disasters which have overtaken the people are God's judgment upon them for their sins. These sins flourish because the Kirk has neglected discipline, and has failed to punish the evil-doers. The second reason for this unhappy state of affairs in the land, is, curiously enough, said to be the people's "great ignorance of his Sacred Majestie's royal and supreme authoritie", and their persistence "in practising of forren and uncouth laws." These "forren and uncouth laws," were of course their native laws which they had inherited from Norway, and which, according to the agreement made at the time the Islands were handed over to Scotland, were not to be abrogated during the period Orkney and Shetland were in pledge to Scotland. This is one example of the process that was going on continually, which ended ultimately in the complete abolition of the native laws.

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. 11. p. 122.

The Acts themselves, as far as they related to the Church, showed a determination on the part of the authorities to punish transgressors, to bring about a better attendance at church, and a more strict observance of Sunday. Their attempts to destroy superstition, and put an end to pilgrimages to sacred places, did not meet with much success, for both these things were still flourishing at the end of the seventeenth century.

It is evident that the taking of the cross from one house to another, especially in scattered districts, was evaded as much as possible. The fact that it had to be sent round a district to assemble people for worship, is another proof of the irregularity of the church services at this period. It is curious to note that the cross was also sent round by the authorities to assemble the people for any state or parish business that required their presence.

In 1620 a commission was appointed by the Privy Council to visit Shetland. Its members were Bishop Grahame, Sir John Buchanan, and William Bruce of Symbister. Its business was to inquire into the abuses, insolences and disorders frequently committed there upon its poor inhabitants. It was suggested that those in power there were conniving at this state of affairs.

It is not known whether the Bishop went himself to Shetland, but he evidently sent a report to the Chancellor, for in a letter to him he says, "Your Lordship now I doubt not will take such order in these matters that the contrie be not further abused."^a

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. 11. p. 136.

When we come to consider the individual parishes in this period, we find that in almost every case the last minister of the previous period is still in office. This need occasion no surprise, as even in Scotland the change met with little or no resistance on the part of the ministers, where the tendency towards the Presbyterian form of government, from the beginning of the Reformation, had been much stronger than in Shetland. The change over seems to have been regarded by the great majority of the people affected by it, as simply the superimposition of Prelacy upon Presbyterianism.

There are two important documents which throw a good deal of light on the parishes at this juncture of the history of the Church in Shetland. The first we have already referred to, viz:- "The Just Rentalis of the Benefices callit the Vicarages wt the Number of the Kirkis pertaining thairto, as they have beine of old, and as they are now callit in Prebentis." It gives the teinds of each parish, the number of kirks, and states whether there is a manse and glebe or not. It must have been drawn up very near the time Episcopacy was established in Shetland.

The other document is called "Overtures for Planting the Kirks of Zetland." It does not bear any date, nor is there any clue to its origin, but it may be assumed with some degree of certainty that it was compiled near the end of Law's bishopric, and its recommendations given effect to before the end of 1618. It contains much valuable information about the various parishes, including the number of communicants.

Both these documents were discovered in the archives of the City Chambers, Edinburgh, and their presence there is accounted for by the fact that in 1641 the Magistrates and Council of Edinburgh obtained a lease of the Bishopric lands of Orkney and Zetland from the Crown, and these papers, along with others, were

sent to Edinburgh for the information of the City Chamber officials

We will take the parishes in the same order as we did in the previous period.

Bressay, Burra and Quarff. The minister, William Umphray, who was ----- appointed to the parish in 1581, remained in the benefice till almost the close of this period. The facts of his ministry have been given in the previous chapter.

According to Pitcairn the Corn Teind was "fyve pece". A "pece" or "peise" was a barrel of butter or oil weighing one hundred and eighty pounds, whose value varied. In one instance we find its value estimated at £20 Scots, in another at £36 Scots. The bow teind or cattle teind was two and a half ^{barrels} ~~pounds~~, of butter, and the bot(boat) teind was ^{three guidlings} ~~"fyve guidlings, wt~~ (with) halff lamb halff woll, "the other half in this case and in almost every case, being taken by the Earl of Orkney "sine ^a titulo."

A gudling or guidling equalled twenty four shillings Scots.

It is possible from these figures to get some idea of the yearly value of the benefice, but the fact that the value of the peise or barrel of butter varied so much, and that we are given no idea of the number of lambs, from which part of the teind is derived, makes an accurate calculation impossible.

We learn **also** that there **are** six marks of land in Bressay for a glebe, but as the area of a mark of land varied with the quality of the soil, the information is not very helpful.

We find that the vicarage had been leased by Alex. Kincaid to the Earl of Orkney for £18 Scots, and that the parish "wants ane
a. Boudie: Celtic and Land. Antiq. of Shetland. p. 156

minister fyftein yeris."^a This is evidently a mistake, as William Umphray was minister from 1581 to at least 1636, as we have already seen. If further evidence of this were required, we have it in a sasine dated 31st November 1635, in which the name of Mr William Umphray minister of Bressay appears.^b

The Bishop was the patron of the vicarage, who had the half of the Corn Teinds, worth three hundred merks. The kirks were to be augmented three hundred merks because they lay eight miles from others, and there were two ferries to cross which was expensive. Twenty merks were to be allowed for the elements. The augmentation was to be paid by the King, who uplifted the half of the Corn Teinds worth three hundred merks.

The number of communicants was four hundred.^c

Dunrossness and Fair Isle. Malcolm Sinclair was still minister -----^d when Episcopacy was set up.

He was succeeded by Laurence Sinclair, who had "been reader at Cross Kirk and Fair Isle in 1575", and was "presented to the vicarage in 1610". He "was probably a brother of Malcolm Sinclair."^d

He was followed by William Moffat, who is first mentioned as minister in 1613. He was still in the charge 10th November 1624.^d He also appears in connection with Dunrossness in the Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland.

Nicol Whyte succeeded him. He was educated at the University of Edinburgh, and took the M.A; degree 27th July 1616. He was admitted to the benefice in 1625, and was still minister in 1656.^d
 a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland p.156.
 b. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.
 c. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland. City Chambers.
 d. Fasti. Vol. VII. p.282.

The Corn Teind of the vicarage of Dunrossness was "nyne peise, ilk peise calculait to £20;" the bowteind four barrels of butter, and the boat teind five gudlings, with half lamb half wool. There were three kirks on the mainland, and another in Fair Isle. The vicarage was leased by the vicar Laurence Sinclair to Malcolm Sinclair of Quendall for £120 Scots. There was a manse and a glebe.^a In the Overtures Dunrossness, Sandwick, Cunningsburgh and Fair Isle were grouped together. The Bishop was the patron of the vicarage, who had the third of the Corn Teind as vicarage. The minister's stipend was of old six score pounds, but by agreement was augmented to three hundred merks by James Sinclair of Quendall the tacksman. The stipend was to be augmented because of the number of kirks and their distance apart. Three hundred merks was to be paid by the King, because he had two parts of the corn tax, which was worth yearly five or six hundred pounds. Twenty pounds was to be paid for the elements, half to be paid by the King and half by the tacksman.^b

Tingwall Whiteness and Weisdale. William Hay, as we have seen, did ----- not demit his parish till 1628. He was succeeded by John Mitchell who was¹⁵⁸⁶ born about 1586, and was the son of James Mitchell of Bandeath, Stirlingshire. He was educated at the University of Edinburgh, and took the M.A. degree 22nd February 1602. He served as assistant at Tingwall after 12th November 1617, and on 21st November 1629 he was presented to the benefice by Charles I.^c

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland p.155-6.
b. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland: City Chambers.
c. Fasti Vol. VII. p.290.

The original deed of presentation is in the Register House, Edinburgh, and is one of the very few Shetland ecclesiastical documents of this period still extant. It reads as follows:-

"Ane Presentatioun maid be our Souverane Lord direct to ane reverend father in God, George, Bischope of Orknay, makand mentioun fforsameikle as the benefice of the Archdeanrie of Zetland is now vaikand in his Majesties handis, and at his hienes gift and presentatioun be demission maid thairof be Maister William Hay, Archdeane of Zetland, minister at the kirkis of the parochin of Tingwall, Quhytness and Weisdail, last lawful possessour of the Archdeanrie, in respecte of his great aige and infirmitie, in favours of his Majesties lovite minister Johnne Mitchell lauchfull son of umquhill James Mitchell of Bandaithe, and our Souverane Lord being willing that ane meit and qualifiet persoune be provydeit and presented to the said benefice of the said Archdeanrie and kirkis above specified for the serving of the cure yairoff, In preaching of the Word, and ministration of the sacramentis thairat of the samyne, and also being informeit of the qualifications, ministrations and guid conversation of the said Mr Johnne Mitchell, and his earnest affectioun to travell in the office of ane minister in the Kirk of God, and that he hath serveit the cuire at the said kirkis this diverse yeires bygane in help and supplie of the said Mr William Hay. Thairfoire our said Souverane Lord has nominated, and be thir presents nominates and presentis the said Mr Johnne Mitchell to the foresaid benefice of the said Archdeanrie of Zetland, with all landis, tenementis, annual rentis, teind scheeves, fruitts, rentis, profeitts, prorentis

emolumentis and dewties, quhatsumever pertening thairto by and within the diocese and Schirefdome of Orknay and Zetland now vaikand in his Majesties handis and being at his gift and presentatioun throw demissioun maid thairoff in maner foirsaid, Requiring the said Reverend fathir, George, Bischope of Orknay to Tak tryell of the qualificatioun, Natur and guid conversation of the said Maister Johne Mitchell, and giff he find him apt and able to use and exerce the office and chairge of ane minister in the Kirk of God To receive and admit him to the foirsaid benefice of the said Archdeanrie of Zetland with all landis, tenementis, annual rentis, kirkis, gleibis, fruitts, rentis, emolumentis and dewties quhatsumever pertening thirto during all the dayis of his lyfityme, Ressave the confessioun of his faith with his aithe of Alledgance for acknowledging of our Souverane Lordis authority and dew obedience to his ordinance, and to authorise him with your Testimoniall thairupon In due forme as offeris or otherwise In case of his insufficiency and inhabilitie To mak report to our said Souverane Lord of the samyn within the space of fourtie dayis nixt after the presenting to the said Bischope of Orknay To Tak tryell of the qualificatioun, natur of thir presents That thereafter his Majesty may present to him some other more qualified persoun To be admitted to the foirsaid benefice of the said Archdeanrie and kirkis of the said parochines of Tingwall, Quhytness and Weisdail quhairby the parochineris quaroff may be provydeit of ane pastor And that the said letter and with command in the samyn to the Lordis of his Majesties Counsall and Sessioun To grant and direct letters thairupoun with the said Bischope his testimoniall of admissioun

and institution following upon the samyne at the instance of the said Maister Johnne Mitchell be ane simple chairge of Ten dayis, chairging all and sundrie, the heretores, fewaris, fermoreis, tenementis, taksmen and parochineris of the said Archdeanrie of Zetland, landis, tenementis, annelrentis and utheris quhatsumever pertening thairto To answer, obey and mak Thankfull payment to him, his factoris, servitouris and utheris in his name of the samyn of their instante crope and yeir of God Jajvjc twenty nyne yeiris and siclyke yeirlie in tyme coming during his said lyftyme.

Given at Quhythall, twentie day of November the yeir of God Jajvjc and twenty nyne yeiris."

In a sasine dated 28th May 1638 the name of Mr John Mitchell, Archdeacon of Zetland, appears. His name is also found as a witness in a charter dated 18th July 1645, and in a disposition dated at Scalloway Banks dated 17th May 1647.^a

He died before 6th August 1569.^b

The Archdeanery had a Corn Teind of twenty-seven peise, the bowteind was five barrels of butter, and the boat teind was sixty gudlings, with whole lamb and wool. The Archdeanery possessed twenty lasts of land (each last equalled eighteen merks) and a glebe of twelve merks. These were leased on long tacks and feu to the laird of Esslemont by Sir James Hay the vicar.^c

In the Overtures it is stated that the patronage of the Archdeanery was alleged to pertain to the laird of Esslemont, who

a. MS. Notes of Shetland Docuements examined by Sir Francis Grant.

b. Shetland Sasine lll. p. 367. Register House.

c. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p. 156.

was also feuer of the whole lands of the Archdeanery, worth one thousand merks and better yearly, and tacksman of the whole teinds, parsonage and vicarage, worth yearly one thousand merks. The minister had no stipend, but the Archdeacon had a pension of twelve score pounds. These kirks by reason of Esslemont's feu and tacks were to be provided by him with seven hundred merks. The reason for this large sum was said to be that Tingwall was the chief part and place of justice in the country.^a

The number of communicants was seven hundred.^a

Fetlar and North Yell. Patrick Hog who had been presented to this ----- benefice in 1603, remained minister till 1615, when he was translated to Delting. There appears to have been a vacancy of six years, and then in 1621 Andrew Edmondston, minister of Yell was also put in charge of Fetlar.^b

John Swinton, son of Thomas Swinton, was admitted to this parish in 1630. He had previously been a minister in Orkney, in the parishes of Birsay and Harray, Holm, and Firth. He was still minister of Fetlar in 1640. "He married Margaret, the daughter of James Pitcairn, minister of Northmavine."^b

Fetlar had a Corn Teind of two and a half peise, the bowteind was two barrels of butter, and the boat teind twenty gudlings with whole wool and lamb. In this case the Earl had not appropriated the half wool and half lamb. There was one kirk with a manse and glebe.^c

a. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland. City Chambers.

b. Fasti Vol. VII p. 295.

c. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shet. p. 157.

The Bishop was patron of the vicarage, and had the fourth part of the Corn Teinds as vicarage.

Patrick Hog had the vicarage in possession, which was worth three hundred merks, to be augmented with two hundred merks, payable by the King because he possessed three parts of the Corn Teind, worth yearly four hundred merks. Twenty merks were to be allowed for the elements, payable equally between King, tacksman and the vicar.

The number of communicants was 360.^a

Unst, or Norwick, Baliasta and Lund. Magnus Norsk was minister of -----
this parish for a great part of this period, and lived till 1632.

Thomas Fraser, who succeeded him, was^a educated at King's College, Aberdeen, and took the M.A; degree in 1618. The date of his admission to the benefice is not known, but he was minister of the parish in 1632, and appears to have demitted it before 1637.^b

Patrick Oliphant succeeded him. He was a son of Laurence Oliphant of Gask, and his mother was a sister of Bishop Grahame. He was educated at the University of St Andrews, and took the degree of M.A; in 1632, and remained at the New College there for a further two years. From there he was certified for probationary trials to the Perth Presbytery 29th January 1634. He was admitted to this parish before 1637, which he demitted prior to 30th May 1655. He^b died before 3rd July 1675.

There was a certain scandal associated with Oliphant's name, as may be seen from the following extract taken from
a. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland. City Chambers.
b. Fasti Vol VII. p.298.

the records of the General Assembly held in 1638.

"Furthermore, Mr Walter Stewart declaired that he had gotten information, under the clerks hand writt of Leith, that there was a gentlewoman there present delivered of a childe, and she declaired that Mr Patrick Oliphant, minister at Scheitland, sister sone to the forsaid Bishop, was father to the chyld, and this the Bishop knew before Lambes, and notwithstanding, tooke no order therewith."^a

The matter, however, seems to have prceeded no further, and Oliphant was allowed to remain undisturbed in his parish.

The vicarage of Unst had a Corn Teind of fourteen peise, the bowteind is six barrels of butter, and the boat teind four score gudlings, so that Unst came next to Tingwall in the matter of revenue from the teinds. There was a manse and glebe. The teinds were set in long tack to Arthur Sinclair by the late Sir James Hay.^b

These vicarages were often set in long tack to laymen. It was easier for a neighbouring landowner to collect the vicarage tithes along with his own, than for the vicar to go round and collect them separately. The fact, however, that an act was passed in 1617, forbidding any prelate "to let any part of his patrimony for a longer term than nineteen years, nor any churchman under a prelate for a longer term than their own lives and five years after under the pains of deprivation and infamy" seems to indicate that the incumbents were in the habit of making over the tithes to a layman for an immediate payment, and often for a period

a. Peterkin: Records of the Kirk of Scotland Vol 1. p. 171.

b. Houdie: *Gallie and Heand. Integ. of Shetland*. p. 157.

beyond their own lives to the impoverishment of their successors.^a

According to the Overtures the Bishop was the patron of the vicarage, and had one-half of the Corn Teind as vicarage. The minister's stipend was six score pounds. James Sinclair brother of Laurence Sinclair of Ayth, was the tacksman of the vicarage, which was worth one thousand merks. The stipend was to be augmented by four hundred merks, to be paid by the tacksman and the King, who uplifted half of the Corn Teind of the said kirk worth six hundred or seven hundred merks. Twenty pounds was to be provided for the elements, to be paid equally by the tacksman and the king.

The number of communicants was four hundred.^b

Mid Yell or Reafirth. Andrew Edmondston who was minister of this -----^c parish before Episcopacy was established, died before 1632.

His son John Edmondston was associated with him as collegiate minister in 1617. He is said to have taken part in drawing up and presenting to the Privy Council, the document in connection with the charges made against Ninian Neven of Windhouse, and was in turn accused by them of having been lawfully suspended for his gross miscarriages. He was admitted a burgess of Aberdeen in 1625. He died before 14th February 1658.^c The name of John Edmondston minister at Yell is found as a witness in three charters dated respectively 15th March 1637, --January 1641 and 3rd October 1642.^d

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland p.162-3

b. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland. City Chambers.

c Fasti Vol. VII. p.302.

d. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

The Corn Teind of Yell was nine and a half peise, and in this case a peise was estimated to be worth £36. The bowteind was five barrels of butter, and the boat teind ninety gudlings. The manse and the glebe had been unjustly seized by the Earl of Orkney. The vicarage was set in tack to William Bannatyne by Mr James Lader (Lauder) the late minister.^a

In the Overtures the parish is described as South Yell, Mid Yell, and North Yell, all in one isle, twenty miles in length. The Bishop was the patron of the vicarage, and had one-half of the Corn Teind as vicarage. The stipend of the minister, Mr Andrew Edmondston, is uncertain, because he received the benefice in tack for payment of nine hundred merks to Robert Monteith of Eaglesay, tacksman of the vicarage, who allowed the minister his stipend out of the said vicarage besides the nine hundred merks paid yearly by the minister to him. These kirks were to be planted by payment of six hundred merks, with twenty merks for the elements, two parts to be paid off the tack, and the third part to be paid by the King, whose part of the teind was worth four hundred merks.

The number of communicants was six hundred and sixty.^b
 Delting, Olnafirth and Laxavoe.
 ----- Gilbert, Howat, who was admitted to this parish just before the establishment of Episcopacy, remained here till his translation to Northmavine in 1615.^c

He was succeeded by "Patrick Hog, son of Archibald Hog minister of Durris." He was "admitted to Fetlar before 1603," and translated to this parish in 1615. He "died between 12th January 1622, and 1st September 1624."^c

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland p.157.

b. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland. City Chambers.

c. Fasti Vol. VII. p.306.

Robert Murray M.A; of Stonewall and Swinister" is first mentioned as minister on 2nd September 1624 in the proceedings before the Privy Council against Ninian Neven of Windhouse." He died before^a 1667. He thus retained his benefice through the three phases the Church underwent from Episcopacy to Presbyterianism, and back to Episcopacy.

Delting had a Corn Teind of five peise, a bowteind of two and a half barrels of butter, and a boat teind of thirty gudlings with half wool and half lamb. There was no manse or glebe. This parish was another victim of the Earl's rapacity, for Pitcairn says of it, "This benefice evil spilt be ane forcit pensioune tain from it be my Lord of Orknay, quha also hes detenit twa barrell butter, assynit to the minister out of the Bishopis thirdis this sevin^b year bygain."

The Bishop was the patron of the vicarage, and had the half of the Corn Teind as vicarage. The Corn Teind was worth four hundred merks, to be augmented by one hundred merks payable by the King, who uplifted yearly the half of the Corn Teind of the said kirk, worth six score pounds. Twenty merks were to be given for the elements.

The number of communicants was 360.^c

Nesting and Lunnasting. Peter Simson, who was appointed to this

vicarage before 10th July 1601, was succeeded by "John Adamson son of
^{John Adamson}
burgess of Linlithgow." He took the degree of M.A; at St Andrews

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 306.

b. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland p. 156.

c. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland. City Chambers.

in 1621, and was "admitted to this parish before 2nd September 1624, when he was an assessor at the trial of Ninian Neven." He was "made a burghess of Linlithgow in 1628," and was appointed a J.P; in 1634. He died between 17th July 1652 and 2nd November 1653.^a

He appears as a witness in a disposition dated at Scalloway Banks 17th May 1647, in which he is designated "Mr John Adamson, son lawful to Mr John Adamson, minister at Nesting."^b

The Corn Teind of Nesting, Lunnasting and Whalsay was seven peise, the bowteind four barrels of butter, and the boat teind forty gudlings with half wool and half lamb. There was a manse and glebe, and the vicarage was set in long tack to the good man of the burgh by the minister Mr Alexander Spittell.^c

In the Overtures the heading of this parish is, "Nesting, Lunasting, Quhailsay (an isle) Skerries, Little Islands," and the minister was said to be dead.

The Bishop was the patron of the vicarage, and had half of the Corn Teind as vicarage, while the minister had only thirty pounds as stipend. It is also stated that Laurence Sinclair of Brough alleged that he was tacksman of the vicarage. There was some doubt about this, however, as it was thought that his tack had expired. The vicarage itself was said to be worth six hundred merks. The minister's stipend was to be augmented to six hundred merks, five hundred thereof to be paid by the tacksman, and one hundred by the King, who possessed the half of the Corn Teind, and the half of the wool and Teind lambs of the vicarage, worth three hundred merks. Twenty merks were to be provided for the elements, to be paid by the King and the tacksman.

a. Fasti Vol VII. p. 309.

b. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

c. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland p. 156.

The number of communicants was six hundred.^a

This parish is a glaring example of the way in which benefices were systematically despoiled of their revenues. Northmavine and Ollaberry. James Pitcairn died in 1612, and ----- according to the Fasti, Gilbert Mowat his successor was not admitted to the parish till 1615.^b We have already seen from a charter dated 1st August 1613 that he was at this time minister of Delting, but in a deed of renunciation dated 13th (month illegible) 1613, in which he appears as one of the parties to the contract, he is designated "minister and vicar of Northmavin," while in a disposition dated as late as 12th September 1616 he is designated "minister of Northmaven", and "vicar of Delting." We find his name once more in a charter dated at South Collafirth 1st January 1617, where he appears as "minister of Northmaven."^c

If the information given in the Fasti is correct the only conclusion we can come to is that sometime in 1613, a few months after the death of his father-in-law, James Pitcairn, the late minister of Northmavine, he was presented to the living of this benefice, but remained as minister at Delting until he was formally admitted to his new parish in 1615. During this period of transition it would be natural for him to be designated in legal documents sometimes as the minister of both parishes, and sometimes simply as minister of Delting or of Northmavine.

a. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland. City Chambers.

b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 312.

c. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

Gilbert Mowat was the fourth son of Andrew Mowat of Hugoland, and was educated at the University of Edinburgh, where he took the degree of M.A; on 30th July 1601. He married Janet, daughter of his predecessor, and after her death he married Margaret Forbes who survived him. He was made Moderator of the Presbytery^a in 1634. He was probably suspended from his office as minister by the Assembly of 1638, as Scott states that he was continued^b in 1642. The date of his demission is not known.

He was alleged to have been guilty in conjunction with Ninian Neven of Windhouse of many "Oppressiounes, Tirranies, and Falceties^a upon the poor inhabitants of the County of Zetland." This charge appears to be substantiated by complaints made to the Privy Council of his brutality to his sister-in-law. The complaints are of such an amazing character, and are such a revelation of the lawlessness that prevailed in the Islands at this period, that we give them in full, as they appear in the minutes of the Privy Council.

" Edin. 27th Feb. 1634.

Complaint by Christian Stewart widow of John Mowat of Hugoland, and daughter of the decd Robert Earl of Orkney, and James Mouat of Ure, her brother-in-law, as follows:- On 27th July 1631, when the said Christian was in the Isle of Papa, with some of her servants, collecting the duties of her life rents lands

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 312.

b. Hew Scott: Fasti Vol. III. Part 1. p. 440.

there, as she had been used to do since the death of her said husband, at the instigation of James Sinclair of Quondail, and Gilbert Mowat her 'unnatural brother-in-law', Patrick Umphra of Sand, and Gilbert Cogill of Gardie, came to her and without any occasion given by her, and without respect to her age and parentage, putt violent hands in her person, and gave her many bauche straike in diverse parts of her body, strake her to the ground, where she being lying swowning in pitifull maner, the said persons verie barbarouslie tred and tramped upon her with thair feit and thereafter violentlie reft from her servants the dewties quhilks they had received from her tennents.' Further the said Mr Gilbert not content with this, resolved 'to wracke the gentlewoman,' with Mr James Mowat his eldest son, John Anderson, hangman('who hanged his ane father, being the said Mr Gilbert's domestick servant') Mans Mowat, James Irwing in Muros, Daniel Rasimsoun in Oxinsetter, Daniel and Malcolm Mowat in Collafirth, Michael Pitcairn in Housetter, Christopher Michelsone in Quoyfirth, John Hall in Norwick, Donald Nicolsone in Clodasetter, Gregor Johnestoun in Soulem, Harie Anderson in Hamer, Bert Williamsoun in Urafirth, and Henry Finlasoun in Skalloway, and others of the lieges to the number of ... persons, armed with swords staves and other weapons, came under cloud and silence of night to the land of Remshell belonging to the said Christian, and violently reft and took away thence 12 oxen pertaining to the complainers; moreover the said Mr Gilbert 'out of ane imperious and tyrannicall humour' has discharged the tenents of her lands of Ollaberrie which were disponsed to her by her late

father, from giving her any day's work, in consequence whereof for the past 12 years these lands have 'lyin ley to her heavie hurt and prejudice.' When the said James, her brother-in-law, lent her six oxen to labour these lands (which formerly were four ploughs, but now only one plough of land) the said Mr Gilbert accompanied by the foresaid persons came thither on and not only violently reft and took away the said oxen, 'but with crueltie hurt and woundit the said Christian with rungs upon the head and other parts of her body.'

Charge having been given to the said James Sinclair, Patrick Umphra, Gilbert Cogill, Mans, Daniel and Malcolm Mowats, James Irwing, Daniel Rasisone, Michael Pitcairne, Christopher Michaelsone, John Lyell, Donald Nicolsone, Gregor Johnestoun, Harie Andersone, John Andersoun, Robert Williamsoun, and Henry Finlasoun, but none of them compearing, the Lords ordain them to be denounced as rebels and escheated."

"Another complaint by the said Christian Stewart, Robert Mowat her son, and Magdalene Androisdaughterspouse to Robert Fraser, her tenant, as follows:- Mr Gilbert Mowat, minister at North Mabein, brother of the husband of the said Christian, 'being unmyndfull of manie good offices done to him be the said husband in breeding him at the schooles, and other wayes promoving him in his studies, he hes now after the said husband's decease most unthankfullie recompensed his loving and kynde dealings towards him with mainie unnaturall and undewtifull outrages intolerable in a person of his profession.' As for example on 13th July 1630 he accompanied by Mr James Mowat his son, John Andersoun their

servant, Thomas Mowat his son, Mans Mowat, Robert Williamsoun in Urafirth, Andrew Andersoun in Hamer, Thomas Rasimsoun in Orabister, John Lyell in Norwick, and Henry Sinclair of Swming, with others of the lieges armed with swords and other weapons, came to the said Christian's liferent lands of Papagurds, of which her late husband had heritable tacks from gentlemen of Norway, the proprietors thereof, and 'imperiously without anie right or warrand commanded the compleaners tennents of the same lands to pay unto them the dewties and maills thairof,' and the tenants refusing 'they forcibly brake up the tennents doores, entered within their houses and medled and intromitted with thair haill goods and gear.' Again on July 1631 these persons 'with sindrie others' took and apprehended the said Magdalene Fraser, being ane poor woman, carried her perforce with thame as ane malefactor to the jogs where they intended disgracefullie to have put her in the same, if they had not been stayed. And the said Robert hearing heirof and having come to the said Mr Gilbert his oncle, and regraited that his mother and her tennents sould be thus used, he and his complices for this onlie cause gave him many bauche and blae straikes in divers parts of his body, tooke his sword from him and brake it in pieces. And the said Katherine (sic) having compleaned heirof to James Mowat of Ure, her brother-in-law unto whois **protection** her husband had left her, and he having written certaine letters to some burgomasters in Norway to advertise the heretours of the saids lands of Papa there of the said Mr Gilbert his cariage aganis the said Christian, and having delyvered thir letters

to Andrew Sinclair in Bullasetter to have been carried be him to Norway, how soone the said Mr Gilbert gott notice heirof, he dealt with Henrie Sinclair of Swming, who was to go to Norway on ship with the said Andrew, to intercept the said letters, who accordinglie when the said Andrew was sleeping staw the letters out of his powtche, and brought the same to the said Mr Gilbert the minister. Charge having been given to the said Thomas and Mans Mowat, John and Andrew Andersoun, Robert Williamsoun, Thomas Rasimsoun, John Lyell and Henry Sinclair, and Christian Stewart compearing personally for herself and the other pursuers, but none of the defenders obeying the citation, the Lords ordain the latter to be put to the horn and escheat.^a"

It will be seen from these complaints that the minister was anything but an estimable character, and it is difficult to understand how he was not deposed from his office, when his accomplices were outlawed and their property forfeited for the crimes to which he had incited them, and in some of which he had played a part himself. There is something very sinister about a man who could persecute the widow of his brother so mercilessly, a brother to whom he owed so much, and employ as his domestic servant, a man who had hanged his own father. Gilbert Mowat stands as the representative of that type of minister, which gave rise to part of that proverb, "All that Scotland ever gave to Shetland was dear meal and greedy ministers," a type that has happily long since disappeared.

a. Register of the Privy Council Second Series Vol.V. p.219.

The Corn Teind of Northmavine was six peise, the bowteind three barrels of butter, and the boat teind forty gudlings, with half wool and lamb. There was neither manse nor glebe. There had been formerly three kirks, but now there were only two.^a

In the Overtures the heading of this parish is, "North Maving, Hildeswick, Oliverrie, North Ry(Roe)".

Hillswick is the village in which the principal church is situated, and to this day the parish is sometimes called Northmavine, and sometimes Hillswick, though the ecclesiastical name of the parish is Northmavine.

The Bishop was the patron of the vicarage, and had the half of the Corn Teind as vicarage. The notorious Mr Gilbert Mowat is named as minister. The vicarage was worth five hundred merks, and the elements were to be furnished by the vicar. The King had half of the Corn Teind worth four hundred merks.

The number of communicants was six hundred.^b

Sandsting and Aithsting. There is very little known about the ----- ministers who laboured in this parish during the period under consideration.

John Sutherland continued to be a reader in the parish probably till 1633. It is interesting to note, however, that in any documents in which his name appears he is invariably designated "minister at Aithsting," or "vicar of Sandsting and Aithsting," never "reader." We have already referred to a wadset and a sasine in which his name is found. There are also two charters

a. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland p.156-7.

b. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland. City Chambers.

dated respectively 31st July 1619, and 5th November 1622, in which he is designated "Mr John Sutherland, minister at Aithsting."^a If the statement in the Fasti is correct, it is evident that he continued to use the titles of vicar and minister after he had been reduced to the status of a reader.

George Hendrie is called reader in 1633, but nothing more is known of him.^b

There is also a Hugh Sutherland minister of the parish, probably a son of the above-mentioned John Sutherland, but the dates of his admission and demission are not known.

In Pitcairn's document the parish is described thus, "Sand Twatt, the twa ordinar kirkis, and thair is uther twa quhilk cōcuris to thir twa callit Gruting and Aith."^c

The Corn Teind of the vicarage of Aithsting and Sandsting was five peise, the bowteind two and a half barrels of butter, and the boat teind thirty gudlings with half wool and half lamb. The parish had neither manse nor glebe.

The Bishop was the patron of the vicarage, and had the half of the Corn Teind as vicarage. The vicarage teinds were worth yearly four hundred merks. The kirks were to be augmented one hundred merks, to be paid by the King who uplifted the half of the Corn Teind. Twenty merks were to be provided for the elements.

The number of communicants was three hundred and fifty.^d

a. MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 314.

c. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland. p. 156.

d. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland. City Chambers.

Walls, Sandness, Papa Stour and Foula. Robert Swinton, the son of

 Thomas Swinton the Archdeacon of Orkney, was the minister of this
 parish in 1607. He died in 1612.^a

Thomas Hendrie, who was the next minister, was a brother of Gilbert
 Hendrie, a merchant burgess of Aberdeen.^a He was educated at the
 University of Aberdeen, where he took the degree of M.A; in 1606.^b

The date of his presentation to the benefice is not known, but
 from a sasine dated 8th July 1616, in which his name appears, we learn
 that he was minister of Walls at that time. He continued to be
 minister of the parish at least until May 1639, for in two
 documents bearing that date he is designated "minister at Walls."^c
 How long he remained minister there after that date is not known.

The Corn Teind of the vicarage was six and a half peise,
 the bowteind three barrels of butter, and the boat teind forty
 gudlings, with whole wool and lamb. It had one manse and glebe, and
 the vicarage was "set in tak for twentie angelis yeirlie to
 Malcolme Sinclair be umquhil Alexr. Kincaid."^d

The Bishop was the patron of the vicarage, and had half of the
 Corn Teind as vicarage. The minister had the vicarage in his own
 possession, worth five hundred merks yearly, and because of the
 number of the kirks, to be augmented with £100 Scots to be paid by
 the King out of his part of the Teinds of the said kirks, and to have
 twenty merks for the elements, one-half whereof to be paid by the
 King, and the other by the vicar. The King's half of the Corn Teind
 was worth four hundred merks. The number of communicants was 560.^e

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 317.

b. Marischal College Records.

c MS. Notes of Shetland Documents examined by Sir Francis Grant.

d. Goudie: Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland. p. 156.

e. Overtures for the Planting of Kirks in Zetland. City Chambers.

It will be seen from this survey of the Church in Shetland during the first period of Episcopacy that steps were taken to put the parishes on a more satisfactory financial basis and repair some of the damage done to them by the rapacity of the Crown and the neighbouring landowners. In Scotland the Corn Teinds which were in reality the Parsonage Tithes, had originally belonged to the rector, and the Vicarage Tithes, which were the lesser teinds had belonged to the vicar, but in 1581 the Assembly ordained that "quhair the parsonage and vicarage pension at any Kirk are now severall benefices, to be all unitit and annexit in ane for the better sustaining of the minister there." In Shetland, however the Corn Teinds had from the first been divided (with the exception of the Tingwall Archdeanery, where the Archdeacon received the whole of the Corn Teinds) between the Bishop and the vicar, and after 1560 the vicar's share of the Corn Teinds was seized by the Crown, probably on the pretext that there were no rectors in Shetland. This injustice was now atoned for somewhat, by giving the ministers a more adequate stipend, where thought necessary, chiefly out of the Corn Teinds received by the King.

And effort was also made by the authorities to improve the spiritual and moral tone of the community. Idolatry and superstition were sternly dealt with, and the laws were more rigorously put into execution against evildoers. An attempt was also made to secure better observance of Sunday, and a regular attendance at church on the part of the parishioners.

For the first time the number of members belonging to each parish is given, the total number of communicants in Shetland being

5790, only 173 less than in 1938. The comparison, however, is of little value, as it is not known what the total population was at that time, and moreover, there are other denominations in Shetland now, each with its own membership.

The oversight of the conduct of the community in each parish was entrusted to the Ranselmen. These men, whose office went back to the early days of Norwegian rule, and whose duties are laid down in the Country Acts framed at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and codified in their present form in 1724, were the last of the native officials of the ancient system of government. They were men of good standing in the parish, appointed by the Baillie court in the presence of all the inhabitants of the district. The word "ransel" means to search, and this denotes the nature of their duties. They were the authorised "searchers" into scandals and misdemeanours in their districts. They had the right to enter houses at all hours of the day or night. They also had the supervision of the home life of the people. It was their business to inquire into family quarrels, and other untoward conduct in the home, and to rebuke those in the wrong. If the guilty parties did not amend their conduct, the Ranselmen were to bring them before the Court for trial. They were also to fine cursers and **swearers**. Two-thirds of the fine was to be given to the poor, and the other third to be retained by themselves. They are to observe those who absent themselves from the Kirk on the Sabbath day, and from diets of catechising. If the offenders can furnish no adequate reasons for their absence, they are to be fined, and any breach anent the

keeping of the Sabbath day is to be reported to the authorities. They are also to inquire into cases of persons accused of "using any manner of witchcraft, charm or any other abominable and devilish superstitions, and faithfully inform against such, so that they may be brought to condign punishment.

They had also other duties connected with the taking of thieves, the supervision of beggars, and the trying of dogs.

The Ranselmen were sworn into their office with a solemn oath, and warned that if they themselves were found guilty of any of the misdemeanours it was their duty to suppress, they would be punished with a double fine.^a

While no doubt the Ranselmen had at earlier periods in the history of the community served a useful purpose in the suppression of crime and disorder, it is to be feared that by this time they had outlived their usefulness, and were set openly at defiance by the people.

All the evidence goes to show that in spite of the efforts that were made to bring about a better state of affairs in the Church and community generally, things were in a very bad way. The reasons are not far to seek. The example of lawlessness and greed set by Earl Patrick and his underlings, the rapacity of his immediate successors, and the outrageous conduct of ministers like Gilbert Mowat of Northmavine were bound to have an evil influence upon the people, and make them reckless in their conduct.

In a decree issued by the Privy Council on 2nd July 1629, a terrible picture is given of the lawlessness and godlessness that prevailed in Shetland at that time. It reads as follows:-
a. Goudie: The Celtic and Scand. Antiq. of Shetland p.241-243.

"Forsameekle as the Lords of Secreit Counsell are informed of the great and high contempt of the ministrie and kirk discipline within the bounds of Zetland whilk is now come to suche ane hight by the presumptioun and boldnesse of lewde and dissolute persons within in the said bounds, that in a maner there is ane avowed opposition made to the ministrie in all and everie thing they goe about for punishment of vice and reformation of maners, as namelie by opin defyances givin by thair dissolute persouns to the ordinarie sessiouns of the kirk, thair impudent and proud refusall in face of Presbyteries and in the presence of the magistrat to rander thair obedience, thair vyle raylings and imprecations spewed out aganis the ministrie in thair faces, the upbraiding of thame in thair pulpits in the discharge of thair functionis, the cartalling of thame at thair presbyteriall meetings, the threatning of thame to breake thair heads, to bullett thair bodeis, to battoun thame if they presooome to use the censures of the kirk aganis thame, the battoning of thair kirk officiars, the lying at await for the ministers awin lyffes, seeking thame by way of haimsuckin(i.e. breaking in) at thair awin houses for that effect, comming to the kirks on the Sabbath day with unlawful weapouns to persew the ministers of thair lyffes, commanding thame most imperiouslie to forbear the censuring of thame, threatning thame with present death if they dissobey. And besides this proud and malapert contempt of the ministrie, and ordours and discipline of the kirk, the abominable cryme of incest is become most frequent and commoun within the saids bounds; and one of the cheefe causes of all thair evils procedeids frome the distance of the place and

countrie from the supreme seate of justice heere, and the difficultie and trouble to bring parteis and heere upon just and trew complaints so that all kynds of impietie hes ane daylie growth and progresse within the saids bounds to the high offence and displeasure of Almighty God, scandall of the kirk and religioun, contempt of our soverane Lord and disgrace of a royall government." ^a

The rest of the decree is taken up with the methods to be adopted to meet the situation. Briefly, the plan devised by the Privy Council was to authorise the Sheriff of Orkney and his deputies to set up courts and try accused persons locally, and then forward the evidence, and process on which they have been convicted, to the Privy Council, the said Council after due consideration to pass sentence. In this way the long delays and heavy expense, which so often prevented the carrying out of justice, were to be eliminated, and the long arm of the law was to reach effectively even to these remote regions.

a. Register of the Privy Council Vol.111. Second Series p.202-4.

Chapter V.

Presbyterianism and Episcopacy in Shetland 1638-1688.

The quarrel between King Charles 1 and his Scottish subjects, which ended in the overthrow of Episcopacy in 1638, began with his attempt to resume the grants of tithes and benefices which had been made by his father to court favourites. This resulted for the most part in a revaluation of the property which had belonged to the Church, instead of a recovery of it, but the King's action had the effect of irritating the greater part of the nobility, and thus of losing its support in his attempt to dominate the Church.

In the next place the Five Articles of Perth, which were being enforced, were bitterly resented by many in the Church. The people for the most part refused to obey the article which enjoined kneeling at Communion, and it is recorded that when Communion was given in the High Church of Edinburgh on Easter Day 1627 "not more than six or seven persons kneeled, and even some of the ministers refrained from doing so."^a The next Communion in Edinburgh was in February 1629, and according to Row the historian, whom Cunningham quotes, "It was given with such confusion that it was pitiful to behold; some of the ministers kneeling, some sitting, some standing, and such confusion among the people also; the minister giving the elements out of his hands to each one, and the reader reading, or the people singing at the same time."^a Cunningham then goes on to say, "It was the same with the other Articles of Perth, which appear to have been like an apple of discord thrown into the midst of the Church."^a

a. Cunningham: Church History of Scotland Vol. 1. p. 496.

Further, the support given to the King's policy by the bishops, who packed and manipulated the provincial and diocesan synods, and the king's refusal to summon a General Assembly, steadily increased the resentment of the people against him and his Scottish bishops, but when an attempt was made to force a new prayer-book upon the congregations, matters came to a head, and the people openly revolted. The first time this prayer-book was used, rioting broke out in St Giles Cathedral, and in the Greyfriars Church.^a It was not till some seven months later, however, that the climax came. Then events moved rapidly. On 1st March 1638 the National Covenant was signed in Greyfriars Church,^b and the King, alarmed at the turn affairs had taken, consented to the calling of an Assembly and Parliament. This Assembly met in Glasgow, and sat from 21st November to the 20th December 1638. In its deliberations it condemned among other things the Service Book, the Book of Canons, Book of Ordination, as well as the High Commission, and declared Episcopacy to have been abjured by the Confession of Faith 1580 and now removed. It also declared the Five Articles of Perth to have been abjured and removed. It deposed and excommunicated eight bishops, and deposed six others, Bishop Grahame of Orkney being among those deposed.^c

The account of Bishop Grahame's submission and deposition is to be found in the minutes of the General Assembly. From these we learn that on 3rd December 1638 "There was ane Letter from the

a. Rankin: The Church of Scotland Vol 11. Book 111 p.501-2.

b. " " " " " " " " " p.511.

c. Compendium of the Laws of the Church of Scotland, part 11. p.313

Bishop of Orkney, and produced by his sone, wherein he submitted^a himselfe in all respects to the Assembly."

A few days later his case came up for consideration by the Assembly, and the following is the record of what took place.

"The Moderator said - 'There are heir two writes come in my hand concerning the Bishop of Orkney. The ane may be proven by witness in this house, and the other is more large, punctuallie deduced and subscryved be 12 ministers of Orkney. If the generall satisfie you not ye shall heare the particular.' Then Mr George Grahame pretendit Bishop was called on and his process red and probatione there. After the reading thereof

The Moderator said - 'Ye see what he hath committed against all the Caveats, and what tyrannicall usurpation he hath exercised above the ministrie, and many other particulars which ye heare in the proces, and, notwithstanding of all this he hath be his letter offered a kynd of submission to the Assembly in saying if God spair his lyfe, he will be readie to doe and answer whatever the Assembly shall impose and requyre, and, lykewayes, he has not subscryved the declinatour, and, therefore it would seeme that he deserves not such a sentence as some uthers.'

Mr Walter Stewart objected that there was nothing in his letter which could import a formall submission, but was rather to be understood of his intention to answer what was to be layed against him.

It was answered by my Lord Lowdown that it was a materiall submission howbeit not formall; and to this answer the Assembly applaudit.'"

Mr Stewart then brought up the matter of the alleged misconduct of the Bishop's son-in-law, to which we have previously referred. " Then the Moderator answered - ' Whether or not the pretendit Bishop of Orkney(not having subscriv'd the declinatour, and given in a materiall submission to this General Assembly) should be deposed or have any further censure?' To the which, after calling of the rolles, the Assemblie did agree; and farder, if he did continow obstinat, he should be excommunicat.^a"

Finally on August 17th 1639 there " was given in to the Assembly from Master George Grahame, sometimes pretendit Bishop of Orknay, an abjuration of Episcopacie, subscribed with his own hand, which was publicly read in audience of the Assembly, and thereafter they ordained the same to be registrat in the Assembly Books ad perpetuam rei memoriam."

In the list of Provincial Assemblies constituted by the Assembly is that of Orkney and Zetland, containing the Presbyteries of Kirkwall and Scalloway. The bounds of this Provincial Assembly were to be the Sherifffdom of Orkney and Zetland.^c

As far as can be ascertained Bishop Grahame was the only one in the diocese of Orkney and Zetland to be deposed by the Assembly. According to the Fasti only one minister was admitted to a parish in Shetland during the year 1639, and his appointment arose through the death of his predecessor, and had nothing to do with the change in the Church government.

- a. Peterkin: Records of the Kirk of Scotland Vol.1 p.171.
b. " " " " " " " " Vol.1 p.204.
c. ^{Peterkin:} Compendium of the Laws of the Church of Scotland part 11.p.313.

What Craven says of Orkney applies equally to Shetland. "Under the new regulations the Presbytery of Orkney was constituted in 1639, when the ecclesiastical affairs of the diocese, now county or stewartry, were conducted by the Presbyters, all of whom appear to have qualified by accepting the new regime, and signing the National Covenant." In regard to signing the Covenant little difficulty appears to have been experienced, and equal easiness was shown afterwards in renouncing it. "The Orkney clergy, as a Presbytery conferred 'ordination' on many occasions between 1639 and 1662, and there is nothing to show that those so ordained, were re-ordained by the Bishops of the Restoration. It was considered sufficient that a licence should be formally given and an obligation taken acknowledging the lawfulness and propriety of the restored episcopacy."^a That is to say the same procedure was followed in Orkney and Shetland as in Scotland.

In 1646 an Act was passed by the General Assembly for the purpose of joining the Presbytery of Kirkwall in Orkney and that of Scalloway in Zetland to the Provincial of Caithness and Sutherland. The reason given for this union was, that the two Presbyteries had never met in any Provincial Assembly, out of which had sprung great abuses and disorders through lack of proper supervision. All the ministers and elders of the two Presbyteries were to meet at the Provincial, and to have place to reason and vote therein as members of the said Provincial, but the Presbyteries were to be of subordinate jurisdiction to the said Provincial. The first meeting was to be held at Thurso in Caithness upon the third

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. 11. p. 203-4.

Tuesday of August, and thereafter as should be directed by the said Provincial Assembly.^a

This arrangement, however, proved to be unsatisfactory, and at the next meeting of the Assembly in 1647 it was decided that only half of the ministers and ruling elders be required to attend the Provincial Assembly, as the absence of all the ministers and elders from the Islands was very prejudicial to the interests of the congregations.^b

But even this latter arrangement was found to be impracticable, owing to the great distance and dangerousness of the sea. It was therefore decided at the Assembly of 1648 to disjoin the Presbytery of Zetland from the Provincial of Caithness and Sutherland, and make it directly responsible to the General Assembly, for the which cause the commissioners were to be sent to each General Assembly the more carefully.^c

This arrangement continued until 1704, when the Presbytery of Shetland or Scalloway was joined the second time to the Synod of Sutherland and Caithness.^d

Unfortunately the records of this Presbytery have all been lost, and practically nothing is known of what took place in the Church in Shetland, during the period of the Civil War and the Commonwealth. As far as can be learned Shetland was but little affected by the events that were taking place in Scotland.

- ^{reference}
a. Compendium of the Laws of the Church of Scotland Part 11.p.71.
b. " " " " " " " " " " Part 11.p.318.
c. " " " " " " " " " " Part 11.p.71.
d. Fasti Vol.V11.p.279.

Both Shetland and Orkney, however, were closely associated with one ill-fated expedition during this period. After the execution of Charles I, Montrose who was in Brussels at the time, was sent for by Charles the King's son, and given a commission to recover Scotland to loyalty. He went first to Sweden, and from there sailed to Orkney, and arrived in the Islands on 12th March 1650. He found four or five hundred troops waiting for him, and it took him another fortnight to make the preparations necessary for their transportation to the mainland. In the meantime the gentry and ministers of Orkney entered into an alliance with him, and some of the ministers agreed to go with the expedition as chaplains. Montrose then crossed to the mainland with an army fifteen hundred strong, a thousand of whom were natives of the Islands. At Thurso the Marquis met with little response, and in Ross-shire his small army was overtaken by the enemy and routed at Invercarron. Most of the Orcadians and Shetlanders were either killed or taken prisoner.

The poor clergy fell between two stools. Having accepted the Covenant on the one hand, and Montrose on the other, they had now to deal with two enemies, the General Assembly who deposed them, and Cromwell who sent his soldiers to bring the country "to order." "The maist pairt of the ministers of Orkney were deposed and appointed to be excommunicate because they had subscribed a peaper to the forsaid Montrose."^a

In 1660 Charles II was welcomed home by an enthusiastic England, nor was Scotland lacking in loyalty. On 19th June a

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol, II. p. 211.

day of Thanksgiving was held in Edinburgh for the Restoration, and there were sermons, banquetings and bonfires. The other towns of Scotland were not slow in following the example of the metropolis, and the Scottish nobles themselves hastened to London to welcome the King.^a

On the 3rd of September a letter from the King was read to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, which gave general satisfaction. In it Charles declared, "We do resolve to protect and preserve the government of the Church of Scotland, as it is settled by law, without violation, and to countenance in the due exercise of their function all such ministers who shall behave themselves dutifully and peaceably, as becomes men of their calling. We will also take care that the authority and acts of the General Assembly at St Andrews and Dundee 1651, be owned and stand in force until we shall call another General Assembly (which we purpose to do as soon as our affairs will permit); and we do intend to send for Mr Robert Douglas, and some other ministers that we may speak with them in what may concern the affairs of the Church."^b The Presbytery was soon to learn how little cause it had for jubilation.

The Scottish Parliament met on 1st January 1661, and began the process of overturning Presbyterianism and restoring Episcopacy. Various acts were passed towards this end. It strengthened the King's prerogative, and made him "to be supreme over all persons and in all causes," and "forbade the Covenant ~~the Covenant~~ to be renewed." It passed the Rescissory Act which

a. Cunningham: Church History of Scotland Vol. 11. p. 79.

b. " " " " " Vol. 11. p. 80.

had the effect of destroying the Presbyterian polity of the Established Church, and of bringing into force the old laws in favour of Episcopacy.^a

It is true that an act was passed in which the King expressed his determination "to settle the government of the Church in such a frame as would be most agreeable to the Word of God, most suitable to the monarchical government, and most complying with the public peace and quiet of the kingdom; and in the meantime allowed the present administration by sessions, presbyteries and synods,"^b but this act read in the light of the Rescissory Act gave little comfort to the Presbyterian clergy.

On the 5th of September of the same year a letter from the King was read to the Scottish Privy Council in which he twisted the meaning of his previous letter to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, and unblushingly declared his real policy. It read, "whereas, in the month of August 1660, we did by our letter to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, declare our purpose to maintain the government of the Church of Scotland settled by law; and our parliament having since that time not only rescinded all the acts since the troubles began referring to that government, but also declared all those pretended parliaments null and void, and left to us the settling and securing of Church government; therefore we have, after mature deliberation, declared to those of your Council here our firm resolution to interpose our royal authority for restoring of that Church to its right government by bishops

a. Cunningham: Church History of Scotland Vol. 11. p. 81-2.

b. " " " " " Vol. 11. p. 82.

as it was by law before the late troubles during the reigns of our royal father and grandfather of blessed memory, and as it now stands settled by law.^a"

A compliant Privy Council passed an act in accordance with the King's letter, and its proclamation at the Market Cross informed the citizens that Episcopacy was once more in the ascendant.^b

On the 1st of October 1662 a Privy Council was held at Glasgow which declared that all parishes should be vacant, whose ministers had not submitted to the bishops before the 1st of November.^c There is no evidence of any kind, however, that any of the ministers of Shetland did not submit. Craven even goes so far as to say in connection with the diocese of Orkney and Shetland, "It may be safely concluded that the Restoration of 1662 was gladly accepted by all. We hear of no protests, no complaints by either parishes or individuals."^d Even if we regard this as a biased opinion, the fact remains that gladly or reluctantly both ministers and people did acquiesce in the new order of things, and thus escaped the bitter persecution which the Covenanters endured in Scotland during the next quarter of a century.

On the 1st of February 1666 there is a petition by William Earl of Morton, Sheriff Principal and Justiciar of Orkney and Zetland, and Robert Mowat his depute for Zetland. In the petition it is stated that a great number of people in Zetland are guilty

a. Cunningham: Church History of Scotland Vol. 11. p. 86.

b. " " " " " Vol. 11. p. 87.

c. Rankin: The Church of Scotland Vol. 11. Book 111. p. 542.

d. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. 111. p. 42.

of witchcraft and incest. The petitioners are of opinion that it is too risky and expensive to send the accused persons to Leith, and ask that certain others be added to their number, and that they be empowered to try those charged, locally. The petition was accordingly granted.^a

After the deposition of Bishop Grahame by the Assembly of 1638, the Presbytery, which had been reconstituted, took over the task of administering the affairs of the Church in Shetland, but as has already been stated, no record has been preserved of its deliberations and decisions, nor has one single Kirk-Session minute book survived to throw any light on the congregational life of this period. All that is known of the Presbytery is that it was joined with the Presbytery of Orkney to form a Provincial Assembly; that no meetings of this Provincial Assembly were ever held, and that after being joined, along with the Presbytery of Orkney, to the Provincial Assembly of Caithness and Sutherland, for the better supervision of its work, it was finally brought under the direct control of the General Assembly.

In spite of the deposition of Bishop Grahame, the King made a last effort to maintain the episcopal form of Church government in the Islands. In 1639 he appointed Robert Baron (Barron) D.D; Professor of Divinity in Marischal College, Aberdeen, to be Bishop of Orkney and Zetland.^b

Robert Baron belonged to an old Fifeshire family, the Kinnairds, and was a brother of Dr John Baron, the Principal of St a. Register of the Privy Council Vol. 11. Third Series p. 136.
b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 353.

Salvator's College, St Andrews. He was himself educated at St Andrews, and is said on one occasion to have attracted the attention of King James VI by the brilliant way in which he carried through an academical argument in his presence. Later he became Professor of Philosophy at St Andrews, but this position he held only for a short time, and in 1618 he left it for the parish of Keith in the district of Strathisla in Banffshire. In 1624 he was translated to Aberdeen on his appointment as "one of the clergy of the city of Aberdeen." A year later he "was nominated the first Professor of Theology in Marischal College on the institution of that chair in 1625."^a In that city he became one of the most outstanding members of the group of famous men who were known as the "Aberdeen Doctors" and was the author of several learned works.^b He had, however, consistently opposed the Covenant, and on the overthrow of Episcopacy, fled to Berwick. Although, as already has been stated, he was appointed to the Bishopric of Orkney and Zetland in 1639, he was never consecrated, and died at Berwick in that same year.^a

After the return of Charles II and the re-establishment of Episcopacy, Thomas Sydserff was appointed to the newly restored Bishopric at the age of eighty-one years. He was the only one left of the old bishops. He was the eldest son of James Sydserff, a merchant of Edinburgh, and received his education at the University of Edinburgh, where he took the degree of M.A. on 22nd February 1602.^c

a. Funeral Sermons on Patrick Forbes. p. 26-7. Note.

b. Craven: Scots Worthies 1560 - 1688. p. 63-64.

c. Fasti. Vol. VII. p. 353.

He was ordained in St Giles' Cathedral on 31st May 1611, as one of its ministers, apparently with the consent both of the Town Council and the Session of Edinburgh. He remained at St Giles until his translation to Trinity College parish, and from there he was promoted to the see of Brechin in 1634. It was while he was minister of Trinity College parish that the see of Edinburgh was founded, and on 19th February 1634 he was appointed dean. In 1635 he was translated to Galloway. There he came into contact with Samuel Rutherford of Anwoth, and in July 1636 he did all in his power to induce him to conform, but failed in his attempt.

Sydserff very nearly lost his life at the hands of a mob in a tumult raised over the service book. Craven gives the following account of the incident. "On October 18th 1637, as he and the lord-justice general, Sir William Elphinston (formerly Secretary to the Queen of Bohemia) were peaceably passing along to the 'Council hous' to discharge a commission, an 'enraged multitude surrounded the bishop of Gallowaye', and followed him 'with fearful cursings and exclamations,' so that it was only 'with much ado' he got safe within the door of the courtroom, and he only returned under a special safeguard to his 'lodgings.'"

He was deposed and excommunicated by the Assembly of 1638, and was finally forced to leave Scotland. He went, first of all, to the King and the royal army at Newcastle, and later settled in Paris, where he exercised the episcopal office in the ambassador's chapel. In this capacity he ordained many to the priesthood, one of them being John Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. At the Restoration he was appointed to the see of Orkney. Though

he never visited his diocese, he took a great interest in it. He sent for the dean of Orkney, and gave him full instructions, and also provided books for the instruction of the clergy. The dean carried out his instructions faithfully, and as a result, Episcopacy was well established in Orkney before Sydserff's death. Shortly before he died he received a visit from the magistrates of Kirkwall, at his residence in Edinburgh. His death took place on Michaelmas Day 1663. Commemorative services were held in St Giles' Cathedral, at which both the bishop and the dean spoke of "his pietie, his learning, his travells abroad, his life and conversation, his sufferinges for the gospell, and all utheris his gifts and graces to the full."

He left four hundred merks to the Cathedral Church of
^aOrkney.

Andrew Honeyman succeeded him in the Bishopric. He belonged to a family that had long been settled in St Andrews, and had three brothers who became divines. They were the sons of David Honeyman (Honyman) of Pitairchney, who was said to have been a baker in St Andrews. The puritans cast this up to them, one of whom described them as "cakes unturned neither raw nor roasted."^b

Andrew Honeyman was born in in 1619, and took the degree of
^cM.A., in 1635. He was presented to his first parish Ferry-port-on-Craig by King Charles in 1641, and later was translated to the Second Charge of St Andrews. From there he was promoted to the Archdeanery in 1662. On 11th April 1664 he was consecrated Bishop
 a. Craven: Scots Worthies 1560-1688. p.93-97.

b. " " " " " p.127.

c. Fasti Vol. VII. p.354.

of Orkney. Various duties prevented him from going to his new diocese until June 1665. On his arrival he was warmly welcomed, and preached before the Synod. He appears to have been a diligent preacher, visitor and pastor. He devoted his spare time to the writing of another book, which was a reply to a treatise entitled "Naphtali". He calls his own work a "Survey of the insolent and infamous libel entitled 'Naphtali'". The controversy was over Episcopacy, and the divine right of kings, and Craven regards Honeyman's book, which was published in 1668 as "a very able defence of Episcopacy" in which he "thoroughly exposed the dangerous tendencies and principles which had overthrown the Church and throne in the time of Charles I, and were to do so again in the time of James II."

In July 1668 he was in Edinburgh on Church business and matters connected with the publication of his treatises. One day, just as he was entering the coach of Archbishop Sharp, he was shot in the wrist with a poisoned bullet, fired by an assassin, who had intended it for the Primate. He returned shortly afterwards to Orkney, and spent the rest of his days in the work of his diocese, but he never recovered from the effects of the attack, and died when he was only fifty-six years of age. His enemies spread about the report that "he died in misery and unhappiness." This was flatly contradicted by James Wallace the minister of Kirkwall, and the first historian of Orkney, who was with him at the end, and declared that "he died in great peace and composure." He was buried in the Cathedral Choir.^a

Craven: Scots Worthies 1560-1688. p.127-8.

Craven says of him, in his History of the Church in Orkney, "The character of Honeyman may be best gathered from his life. It was consistent and fearless, benevolent and just. He possessed a remarkable power of, calm and dispassionate argument in a time surging with troubles and confusions. Diligent, affable and tender-hearted, he earnestly desired the peace of Israel."^a

The next bishop was Murdoch MacKenzie who was born in 1600, and was the second son of John MacKenzie of the Gairloch family. He graduated at Aberdeen in 1618, and was ordained in 1633.^b

In his earlier years he was chaplain to a Scottish regiment in the army of Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden. Later he became incumbent of Elgin; from there he went to Inverness, and then to Elgin.

At the Restoration he was appointed to the bishopric of Moray, and was consecrated to the see on May 7th 1662, in the Abbey Church at Holyrood by the Archbishop of Glasgow and the Bishop of Galloway. The form of service which was used, was the English Ordinal, and the consecration sermon was delivered by the Rev. James Gordon of Drumblade, whose parish was on the border of Moray, but belonged to the Aberdeen diocese. In Moray he proved himself to be a diligent and wise ruler, where he remained for nearly fifteen years.. He held the first pastoral charge of Elgin along with his bishopric until his translation to Orkney.

Craven writes, "The annalist of Elgin says of him, 'He appears to have been a person of considerable talents, carried the most of his clergy along with him, and managed his diocese with

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. III. p. 57.

b. Fasti Vol VII. p. 354.

prudence.' He seems on the whole to have been fairly broadminded in his relations with the Nonconformists.^a"

He was installed as Bishop of Orkney on 5th September 1677, and died 17th February 1688.^b Even in 1681-2 he was so infirm of body through old age, that he was not able to travel to Caithness, to have the test administered to him by the bishop there, and the Dean of Orkney was therefore empowered to administer it to him, and for the same reason he was permitted to commission one of the ministers of Orkney to administer the test to the clergy in Shetland.^b

The last bishop to be appointed to Orkney and Shetland was Andrew Bruce, who was born about 1630, and was the second son of William Bruce of Balquhaig, Commissary of St Andrews. He was educated at the University of St Andrews, and took the degree of M.A; on 23rd June 1658. He was appointed Master of Humanity at St Andrews University in December 1660, and also became Regent in St Salvator's College. Later he passed his trials before the Presbytery, and got a testimonial on 10th May 1665, and was ordained on the twenty-sixth day of the same month. On 14th June 1665 he was admitted to the parish of Kilrenny. He was appointed Professor of Divinity at the University of St Andrews before 30th August 1671, and was Rector of the same 1674-7 and 1680. On 21st January 1673 he was admitted minister of St Andrews, and appointed one of the chaplains to King Charles II on 31st July 1675. On 5th September 1679 he was promoted to the Bishopric of Dunkeld, and

a. Craven: History of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Moray. p.59-62.
 b. Fasti Vol. VII. p.354.
 c. Register of the Privy Council Vol. VII. p.247.

consecrated on the twenty-eighth day of the following month. He was finally translated to the see of Orkney. His election to this bishopric took place on 4th July 1688, and his appointment was ratified on the seventeenth day of the following month. He did not hold the office long, for he was deposed on the abolition of Episcopacy on 11th August 1689. He then retired^a to Kilrenny, which had been his first parish, and died there. Craven speaks of him as being "justly esteemed for his great learning, piety, and prudence, by all good men."^b

When we come to consider the individual parishes it has to be admitted that the information at our disposal for the greater part of this period is very scanty, and very little can be added to what is given in the Fasti, and moreover the information found there, and in a few stray documents is concerned with the ministers of the parishes rather than with the parishes themselves. Sometime, however, during the bishopric of Murdoch MacKenzie 1677-1688, Sir Robert Sibbald obtained the material for that section of his book (Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland) which dealt with the parishes of Shetland, from three Shetland ministers. "I shall give," he says, "the description of the particular isles such as they were sent to me by Bishop McKenzie's orders, done by Mr Theodore Umphray, Mr Heugh Leigh, and Mr James Kay, the most intelligent ministers there."^c

As this information was obtained from local sources almost at the close of this period, it is of considerable value, and full

a. Fasti. Vol. VII. p. 354.

b. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. III. p. 123.

c. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland. p. 26.

use of it will be made of it in our account of the ministry of the various parishes of this period.

Bressay, Burra and Quarff. William Umphray, who was in all

probability the son of the previous minister, was appointed to this parish shortly after the Assembly of 1638. He was educated at Marischal College Aberdeen. About the year 1639 he "acknowledged receipt of the Covenant "by ticket" to James Heind, minister of Kirkwall.^a His death took place after 18th January 1668.

There was a vacancy of two years, and then Hugh Leigh was appointed to the parish. He was a native of Moray, and was educated at the University and King's College, Aberdeen, where he took the degree of M.A; 19th July 1666. He was minister of the parish at the time of the Revolution, and was admitted to the Presbyterian communion.^a

Sibbald's account of this parish was no doubt furnished by Leigh himself. According to it, this parish was made up of three Baileries, the island of Burra, West and East Wharff (Quarff) on the mainland, and the island of Bressay.^b In Burra there "is a church within a mile to the southmost end of the island, standing near to the Sound side of Burray called St Lawrence." Its steeple is described as "well five or six stories high, though a little church, yet very fashionable, and its sanctum sanctorum (or quire) yet remains." There was also a chapel in Brough, but it was in ruins,^c and nothing was known of it.

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 280.

b. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland. p. 26-7.

c. " " " " " " " " " p. 55.

In Bressay there were two churches,"the one in the north end at Gunielstay,named St Olla's church,the other in the east side at Cullinsburgh named St Maue's church,where the minister hath his manse. Also there is a chapel in the south west side at Kirkabuster named St John's but now ruinous;when or by whom they were built is not known,only the two foresaid churches(where ordinances are now served) were a little enlarged by the late minister."^a

b

One minister served the whole parish.

Dunrossness and Fair Isle. There is no mention of Nicol Whyte -----
after 1656,but his successor was not admitted to to the parish till 1662.

The next minister was James Forbes,who was educated at St Andrews,and took the degree of M.A;there on 25th July 1657. He was admitted to the parish in 1662. The date of his demission is not known. After his death"his widow bequeathed certain lands for the benefit of widows in the parish."^c

He was succeeded by James Kay,son of John Kay bailie of Kirkwall. He was born about 1656,and received his education at the University of St Andrews,where he took the degree of M.A; 26th July 1673. He was ordained and admitted to the second charge of Kirkwall,4th May 1681,and was translated and admitted to Dunrossness and Fair Isle in 1682. He was still minister of the parish at the time of the Revolution.^d

a.Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland p.60.

b. " " " " " " " " " " p.27.

c.Fasti Vol.Vll.p.282-3.

d. " " " p.283.

As we have seen already James Kay was one of the ministers who supplied Sibbald with information about the Islands, and his account of his own parish is most interesting and valuable, especially where it reveals his opinions of the people amongst whom he laboured, as the following extracts will show.

"The first ministry or Bailewick in order, to the south, is Dunrossness, bounded from Soumburg-head to the south to Fladabuster to the north about -- miles; it hath but one minister, the two preaching kirks, and but one sucken or Bailewick. The islands belonging to it are Pair Isle, Mousa, also Kings Isle, Corfe Holme, Colfa etc.^a"

"Dunrossness. Southward from Maweeck lyes an hill called Ireland Head, from which toward south-east lyes a village called Ireland^b where stand the walls and steeple of an old kirk."

"In the midst of sand at the end of Quendal Bay stands the South Kirk of Dunrossness called the Cross Kirk, a church pretty large and well replenished, but of no magnificent structure, yet equal to (if not exceeding) the rest ^c of the country."

" At the head of the Bay of Sandwick is the kirk of Sandwick of as good a figure and order, as any almost in this country." ^d

"Dunrossness was of old divided into three parishes, but now only two (united under one ministerie) viz: - The South parish, or parish of Cross-Kirk, and the parish of Sandwick, the people of Cunisburgh a. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland. p. 26

b. " " " " " " "

p.36.

C. " " " " " " "

p.39.

d. " " " " " " " " " " p.42.

now resorting to Sandwick. As concerning the rest of the kirks and chapels in Dunrossness, by whom they have been built, and upon what occasion, cannot be certainly determined. Some think they have been built by shipwrecked men in the time of popery, and dedicated to their guardian saints; others that the Udallers of this place (being men of substance) have built them for their own convenience and ease.^a"

"The inhabitants of the south parish are (for the most part) strangers from Scotland and Orkney whose language habits manners and dispositions are almost the same with the Scottish, only here they are much more sagacious and subtile, and withall false and deceitfull, proud above measure, stubborn, if softly, but flexible, if roughly handled, not unfitly compared by a certain gentleman to the thistle, which if you grip not hard will prick you. They are generally great drinkers, and withall venereous and quarrelsome, their language is the same with the Scottish, yet all the natives can speak the Gothick or Norvegian tongue: They are generally very sharp and docile.^b"

"The inhabitants of the north parish are, with very few exceptions, natives of the place, yet of the same habit manners disposition with the other, excepting that here, they are very sober less venereous and quarrelsome and withall richer. All the inhabitants can speak the Gothick or Norvegian ~~and Norvegian~~ Language and seldom speak other among themselves, yet all of them speak the Scots tongue, more promptly, and more properly, than generally they do in Scotland.

a. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland p.45.

b. " " " " " " " " " p.49.

Their hospitality here must **not** be pretermitted, wherein a common farmer doth far^a exceed the gentlemen of other places."

"Fair Isle. This isle is reckoned ten leagues or thirtie miles from Zetland, yet it is united with the ministerie of Dunrossness, the minister whereof goes thither once a year, where for the space of six weeks (less or more according to his convenience) he daily discharges some part of his ministerie function, preaching frequently. There is a little church here, more regular, and more orderly frequented than will be easily believed: they have always a reader who every sabbath reads the sacred scriptures, and in the minister's absence catechizes them: and it is worth the marking that fornication and other such escapes (frequent in other places) are very rare here."^b

Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale. John Mitchell continued to be the minister of this parish till 1662. "He is styled 'late minister' 3rd August 1641." What is meant by this is not known. It may simply denote that he was suspended temporarily for refusal to conform to the new order of things, but there is no evidence for this conjecture^c

James Nicolson, who succeeded him, was the "son of James Nicolson, advocate, commissary of Brechin, and grandson of James Nicolson, Bishop of Dunkeld." He was educated at the University of St Andrews, where he took the degree of M.A; on 16th June 1652, and "became schoolmaster of Dysart in 1660, but resigned in the following year." He was admitted to this parish in 1662 and "died

a. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland p.49.
 b. " " " " " " " " " " p.52.
 c. Fasti Vol.VII. p.290.

before 1675.^a

He was succeeded by John Gowdie(Gauden) who was "born in 1650." He was the "son of Thomas Gowdie, and Mary Stewart of Campston," and received his education at the University of Edinburgh, where he took the degree of M.A; in 1668. He was inducted into this parish on 18th April 1675, and died 15th May 1688.^b

In the oaths of allegiance which he took to the King and Bishop respectively, his name appears as "John Gowdie", while he signs himself "John Gaudie". It may be of interest to see the nature of these oaths, and they are inserted here as examples of the ecclesiastical oaths of this period.

" I, Mr John Gowdie now nominatt and admitted to ye United Kirks of Tingwall and Weisdail, Testifie and Declare in my conscience that the right excellent, right high and mightie Price Charles the Second by the grace of God King of Scotland, England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc, is the onlie Lawfull supreme governour of this realme, as weill in matters Spirituall and ecclesiasticall as in matters Temporall; and that no foreigne Prince, State nor Potentate hes or ought to have any jurisdictione, power, superioritie and authoritie, and promise that from henceforth I shall and will bear faith and trew alledgeance to his aires and laughfull successores, and to my power and skill assist and defend all Jurisdictiones, Priviledges, Preemenencies and Authorities granted and belonging to his Highness, his aires and laughfull successores, or united and subject to his royal

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 290.

b. " " " p. 290.

command: And farther to acknowledge and confess to have and to hold the said charge and possession of the same under God, of his Majestie and his Crowne royalle of this realme. So help me God.

John Gaudie.^a"

"I, Mr John Gowdie, minister now admitted to the kirks of Tingwall and Weisdall in the countrey of Zetland, promises and swears to Andro, Lord Bishop of Orkney and Zetland, obedience to him and his successores in all lawfull things - So help me God.

John Gaudie.^a"

For the first time Lerwick appears as having a church and congregation. It formed part of the parish of Tingwall. The church seems to have been erected sometime before 1685. There was no regular ministry there before 1701. The only name associated with Lerwick at this time is that of Robert Ramsay, called "Preacher in Lerwick,"^{at} on 6th January 1685, when Henry Smyth, dyer, petitioned Ramsay and "remanest (remanent?) members of the Session for ane competent room in the church of Lerwick for erecting and building ane desk(seat)."^b

According to Sibbald the "ministerie of Tingwall" comprised four parishes and two towns. On the east side there was the parish of Gulberrie, which contained four old chapels, four Picts houses, and also the town of Lerwick. Whiteness was on the west side, and had one preaching church called St Olla's. The third parish was Weisdale, which also possessed one preaching church called "Our Ladies church concerning the building of which at first

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. III. p. 143.

b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 285.

strange things are reported and believed by the vulgar who idolize it superstitiously." Tingwall, which was the fourth parish possessed one church for preaching, called St Magnus, and about twelve chapels.^a

The other town in the "ministerie of Tingwall" was Scalloway, and there were also several islands belonging to it, Trondray, Greenholm, Oxno, Langa, Hildefa, Havery, Hoy, Flotta, Gruna, the two Cheynies etc.^a

Fetlar and North Yell. John Swinton was still minister of this ----- parish in 1640, but how long after that is not known.

The next minister was John Heggie, who was admitted to this parish in 1670. He "petitioned the Privy Council for the vacant stipends of 1668^{and 1669}, and was granted the same ~~on~~ 12th May 1670." The grounds for the petition were, that while he had hopes for an augmentation through the bishop from the Commission for the Planting of Kirks, in the meantime he had need of the money for ^b removal purposes.

In 1674 he was presented to the living of St Andrews and Deerness in Orkney. The opening clauses of the Deed of Presentation read: -

"Presentation and Colation, my Lord Bishop of Orkney to Mr John Heggie, Parishes of St Andrews and Deerness 1674.

Be it kend till all men be thir present letters, We, Androw, be the mercie of God, Bishop of Orkney and Zetland and undoubtet patrone of the viccarages underwritten: Forasmeeke as we have
 a. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland p.27.
 b. Fasti. Vol. VII. p.295, and Register of Privy Council Vol. lll. 2nd Series p.170.

taken sufficient tryal of the literature, qualifications, good and honest conversatione of our Lovitt Mr John Heggine, present minister at the kirk of Fetlar in Zetland, and finding him qualified, meet and willing to continue in the ministerie within the Kirk of God:

Thairfoire wit ye us to have nominat, presented, given, granted, disponed and confearred: Lykeas we be the tennor heirof, nominat, give, grant, dispone and confear to the said Mr John Heggine all and haill, the viccarages, teinds of the paroch^a, kirks and parochines of St Andrews and Deerness."

While not too much importance must be attached to the Bishop's statement that he had taken steps to assure himself of the minister-elect's scholarship and good character, it does show that at a time when there was a good deal of laxity in the Church, emphasis was still laid on learning and goodness as essential qualifications for the ministry.

John Heggie was succeeded by William Campbell. All that is known of him is that he was educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen, 1667, was admitted to this parish about 1675, and died in March 1686.^b

The next minister was "Robert Mowat, son of Gilbert Mowat, minister of Northmavine." He was educated at the University of Edinburgh, where he took the degree of M.A; in 1643. He was admitted to the parish of Mid and South Yell about 1655, and was translated and admitted to this parish about 1684. He^b died, unmarried, before 1694."

a. Craven: History of the Church in Orkney Vol. lll. p.57-8.

b. Fasti Vol. Vll. p.295.

Sibbald in his description of the island of Yell, says among other things, "It hath three churches in it, in which there is sermon, each near 8 miles distant from other, the Isles of Samfrey, half the island of Bigga, together with the isle of Hascosea, all inhabited, belong to it; yea the isle of Fetlar was, at the Reformation and long after, a part of this ministerie, which had then but one minister, though now two, and there are about twentie chapells in it and it makes a Baillewick."

Of Fetlar itself he says, "There is one church in it for sermons, and it hath ten or eleven chapels." ^b

Unst, or Norwick, Baliasta and Lund. Patrick Oliphant, who demitted

this parish before 30th May 1655, was succeeded by Thomas Fraser, who
is "styled minister" in 1661 and 1665, but nothing more is known
about him.

There is a considerable gap before the appointment of the next minister. This was Alexander Craig, who was educated at King's College, Aberdeen, where he took the degree of M.A; in 1669. He passed his trials before the Presbytery of St Andrews, and as the see of Caithness was then vacant, he received a testimonial to the Archbishop for ordination on 3rd May 1676. He "became schoolmaster at Scalloway before 1675." He was "admitted to this parish about 1683, but deserted", or more likely, was expelled from his charge ~~in~~ about 1697. He was resident in Fraserburgh, May 1702. He "intruded there in 1708, and was accused ~~on~~ 6th March 1716, of having intruded successively at Aberdour, Tyrie and Fraserburgh."

While minister in Unst he lost one of his sons who fell from
a. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland. p.69.
b. " " " " " " " " p.70
c. Fasti Vol.VII. p.298.

a cliff, and was killed. He also experienced the misfortune of having his daughter carried away by the boat's crew of a French frigate, which had entered the Bay of Norwick in search of petty plunder. She was, however, soon liberated. He seems to have had an eventful, but somewhat troubled and unhappy life.^a

According to Sibbald there were at this time three churches in Unst, "one in the south part called Week, another in the middle of it called Balzistay, and a third in the north part called Haralds Week." There was only one minister in the island, and he evidently found much difficulty in getting his stipend from the lay vicars, for he complains that "the vicars of Unst have never payed the ministers their stipends either compleatly or pleasantly, and with all they have stolen away from the church 300 merks per annum," and ventures to predict that they may yet rue it, as did the eagle whose nest "was once set on fire with a coal that sticked to the flesh that was stolen from the altar."^b

Sibbald describes the inhabitants as generally "irreligious and much given to venerie, and to tobacco." He also says, "They have a language which they call Norn that differs from Danish."^c Mid Yell or Heafirth. The date of the demission of John Edmondston ----- is not known, but he died before 14th February 1658, and was succeeded by Robert Mowat, who was admitted about 1655, and translated to Fetlar.^d

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 298-9.

b. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland. p. 75.

c. " " " " " " " " " p. 76.

d. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 302.

He was succeeded by Robert Ramsay, who was educated at the University of Edinburgh, and took the degree of M.A; on 7th April 1675. He was admitted to this parish before 5th June 1684. As has already been stated, he was called preacher in Lerwick chapel in 1685, and was received into communion by the Commission of Assembly in 1700. He died on 10th January 1716 aged about sixty-one years.^a

We have already referred to Sibbald's description of the island of Yell in connection with the parish of Fetlar and North Yell.

Delting, Olnafirth and Laxavoe. Robert Murray probably continued to -----
be the minister of this parish till his death in 1667.

He was succeeded by Alexander Dunbar M.A; of Wethersta, a "son of James Dunbar of Churchill (Kirkhill)" who "was a second son of Thomas Dunbar of Grange, minister of Auldearn." He was born in 1623, and from 1662 to 1665 he was schoolmaster at Auldearn. On 3rd December 1665 he "passed his trials before the Presbytery of Forres, and was recommended to the Bishop for licence." He was ordained and inducted into the parish of Inveraven before 2nd April 1667, and translated to this parish before 7th April 1688, and was Moderator^b of the Presbytery for thirteen years.

Sibbald in his account of Delting says, " Here in old times there was but one parish church, northwestward at Scatstage called St Paul's Church, somewhat eccentric for the people, wherefore it was

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 302.

b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 306.

deserted and is become altogether ruinous;but the inhabitants here(for their better accommodation in Gospel Ordinances) afterwards erected and built two churches one at Olna Firth in the south end called St Olla's Church,and the other in the north end of Daleting called St Magnus's Church:both these churches of late were rebuilt and enlarged by the present minister thereof,who constantly visits them per vices,as is commonly observed through the whole country. These churches are five or six miles distant the one from the other.^a"

Nesting and Lunnasting. John Adamson,who was admitted to this parish

parish in 1624,died before 2nd November 1653,and after a lapse of some four years was succeeded by Theodore Umphray,who was the youngest son of William Umphray,minister of Bressay,Burra and Quarff. He was born in 1630,and was educated at King's College, Aberdeen,where he took the degree of M.A; in 1651. He was admitted to this parish before 22nd July 1657,and in the course of time acquired considerable landed estate in the Islands. His subsequent career will be fully dealt with in the next chapter.^b

As we have seen,Theodore Umphray was one of the three ministers who supplied Sibbald with information about the Islands, but he does not say much about his own parish,nor express any opinion of the character of the people amongst whom he laboured so long. He describes his parish as being "bounded on the south with Tingwall,on the west with Delting,on the north with the isle of Yell,and on the east with the ocean,and goes on to say,"There
a: Sibbald:Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland.p.65-6
b.Fasti Vol.Vll.p.309.

are three several congregations belonging to this ministerie, two on the mainland, viz. Nesting and Lunasting; a third in the isle of Qualsey, divided from the other two by a ferry of three miles of great current, dangerous to pass with a south-east wind: The Skerries lye from Qualsey six miles, a place commodious for fishing and because of this, many of its adjacent neighbours resort to it.^a"

Northmavine and Ollaberry. It is not known how long Gilbert Mowat ----- remained minister of this parish after 1642, but as far as can be learned, no fresh appointment was made until 1662, when Hercules Sinclair is mentioned as the minister of the parish. All that is known of him is that he took the degree of M.A; on 25th July 1657 that "his only child Margaret married Robert Ramsay, minister of Yell,^b and that he caused the chapel of Eshaness to be destroyed, so as to put an end to the pilgrimages and superstitions connected with it.

A certain Laurence Sinclair is mentioned as minister of this parish, but the dates of his admission and demission are not known. All that is recorded of him is that he "went one Sabbath ~~day~~^c to preach at Ollaberry, where he died and was buried."

The next minister was James Rose, brother of Andrew Rose burgess of Aberdeen. He was admitted to this parish in 1681 and died in 1690.^c

Sibbald in his account of this parish says, "Beside Hillswick a. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland. p. 28.

b. Fasti. Vol. VII. p. 312.

c. Fasti. Vol. VII. p. 313.

Voe there is a church for sermon called St Olla's Church.^a He then speaks of the chapels which lie in ruins in the parish, and mentions in particular the famous Cross-Kirk chapel at Eshaness to which we have already referred elsewhere, and adds this fact to what we already know of the pilgrimages to these ruins, that on these occasions the people remained there feasting and sporting until the morning. By this time, however, these superstitious practices had ceased. He describes the inhabitants of this parish as "hospitable, subtile, given to flatterie."^b

Sandsting and Aithsting. Hugh Sutherland, probably a son of John ----- Sutherland, a former minister is mentioned as the minister of this parish, but the dates of his admission and demission are not known.^c

He was succeeded by James Strachan, whose name appears in a charter dated 1st February 1653. He had himself "a charter of twelve merks of land in Keawick from Thomas Cheyne of Vaila, on 11th August 1664." While crossing a small ferry off Forehead, in a boat, in which he was carrying his tithes, he was drowned. This happened about 1666.^c

The next minister was Cornelius Barron, who was educated at St Salvator's College, and University of St Andrews, where he took the degree of M.A; on 23rd July 1659. He "was Presbytery-bursar at St Andrews in 1664," and passed his trials there before the Presbytery, receiving a testimonial 17th October 1666 for licence.

On account of his poverty nothing was taken for the Library or
a. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland. p.71.

b. " " " " " " " " " p.72.

c. Fasti. Vol. VII. p.314.

trials before them. "He was called to Orkney and got a certificate 27th August 1667 for ordination." In that year he was admitted to this parish.^a All that is known of his subsequent career falls within the next period, and will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Sibbald gives us very little information about this parish. He tells us the boundaries of the parish, Tingwall on the east, Walls on the west, the ocean on the south, and Delting on the north, and concludes, "here are two churches for preaching and congregations, one at Sand, another at Aith: hence that part of the parish is called Aithsting, both are under one bailerie, taking in with it the isles of Vemindry and Papa litle."^b

Walls, Sandness, Papa Stour and Foula. William Hay, who was educated ----- at Marischal College Aberdeen, and took the degree of M.A; in 1623, was admitted to this parish about 1640. He died 28th October 1647.^c

He was succeeded by["] Laurence Umphray of Whiteness, second son of William Umphray, minister of Bressay." He was "educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen 1638," and then "studied theology under Dr Sharp in the University of Edinburgh," later becoming "chaplain to Lady Hangingshaw, for which he got authority from the Presbytery of Dalkeith 3rd June 1647." He "was admitted to the Exercise there" on the 3rd of June in the following year, and was ordained and admitted to this parish before 30th May 1655. On 22nd November 1666 a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 314-5.

b. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland p. 29.

c. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 317.

"he acquired the lands of Whiteness from Gilbert Hendrie, burgess
of Aberdeen," and "died before 1674."^a

The next minister was "James Ogilvy, a native of Banff." He was educated at King's College, Aberdeen, where he took the degree of M.A; on 17th September 1662. He was "admitted to this parish in 1672," and "died ~~in~~ 1695, aged about 53."^a

Here again Sibbald's account is very meagre. He gives the boundaries of the parish, Viz:- Sandsting on the east, the ocean on the south and west, and Northmavine on the north; and says that the parish consists of Walls, Sandis, and the isles of Vaila, Papa Stour and Foula, and describes Foula as "well replenished with cows, fish, feathers,"^b He further states "the united churches of Walls in the Mainland are Walls and Sandis," and in the islands, "Papa and Fula, Walls being the westmost parish in the island of Yetland: the church of the same is called St Paul's."^c

Sibbald speaking in general terms of the clergy and people of Shetland towards the close of this period, says of the former, "The clergie are learned and painfull and diligent, and most of them have three churches at considerable distances," and of the latter, "The people here are generally loyal and without dissatisfaction as to matters of government in church or state." He describes the religion as the Reformed, and says "under a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 317.

b.Sibbald:Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland.p.30

C. " " " " " " "

p.63.

d. " " " " " " "

p.16.

e. 2 " " " " " " " " p.18.

Episcopacie they make a part of the Diocesis of the Bishop of
Orkney.^a"

Later on in his account he tells us that formerly the ecclesiastical government in Shetland was an Archdeanery, and that this was independent of Orkney, but that later the Archdeanery was "annexed to the bishoprick of Orkney." Then he goes on to say, "Now under Presbyterie the ministers (in number eleven) met four times a year, viz:- on the first Wednesday of each quarter, each of them hath large bounds, and two or three churches, in which they preach on the Sundays per vices, which makes them toil great: their maintenance is by tithes, either vicarage or umboth tithes, the vicarages some of them are in the hands of Lay-vicars or of the ministers themselves, the umboths belonging to the Crown.^b"

Apart from the few observations which are found in Sibbald about the state of religion in some of the parishes in Shetland, there are no contemporary accounts of religious life in the Islands during this period. It would seem, however, from the petition of the Earl of Morton and his depute, previously referred to, that witchcraft and incest were rife in the Islands, as in the last period, but whether the measures taken at that time for a stricter observance of the Sabbath, a better attendance at church, and the suppression of lawlessness generally, resulted in any appreciable improvement in the conduct of the parishioners, is not known.

The long vacancies in some of the parishes reveal the

a. Sibbald: Description of the Islands of Orkney and Shetland, p. 26.

b: " " " " " " " " p.82.

difficulty of obtaining ministers for this remote diocese, a difficulty that has never been wholly overcome to this day. The Readers who had alleviated the situation somewhat in the early days of the Reformation, were by this time fast disappearing, and the modern Home Mission Agents who were ultimately to take their place, belonged to the generations yet unborn.

Chapter VI.

Presbyterial Form of Church Government Re-established in Shetland.
1688-1702.

It is a curious fact that the alarm felt in England by the Anglican Church at King James the Second's championship of Popery indirectly brought about the downfall of Episcopacy in Scotland. For it was this fear, to a great extent, that led to an offer of the throne to William Prince of Orange, who had married the daughter of James, and was a stout protestant. In response to this invitation he landed at Torbay on 5th November 1688, and was enthusiastically welcomed and acclaimed as king in place of James who ~~was~~ fled the country.

In Scotland itself the two principal factors that brought about the overthrow of Episcopacy were (1) The cruel persecution of Presbyterians by the Episcopal Church, (2) The bishops' refusal to take the oath of allegiance to William.

For nearly thirty years Episcopacy had done all in its power to suppress those who would not submit to its claims, and in the endeavour to achieve its fixed purpose had not hesitated to condemn men and women to torture of every kind. It is not surprising therefore that the people who had adhered to the principles of Presbyterianism during the "killing times", and formed the greater part of the population, were ready to welcome a revolution which promised an opportunity of getting rid of a Church that in the name of religion had caused so much suffering in the land.

There is no doubt that William was very reluctant to interfere

with the Church in Scotland, and would not have done so if the bishops had been willing to swear fealty to him, but this they would not do from a mistaken sense of loyalty to James. This was the attitude taken up by Dr Rose, the Bishop of Edinburgh, in his interview with William in London. The King first of all asked him if he were returning to Scotland, and he replied that he was, if the King had any commands for him. The King then expressed the hope that he would be kind to him, and follow the example of England. The Bishop answered that he would serve the King as far as law, reason or conscience would allow him.^a The King was not satisfied with this answer, and the further refusal of the bishops to take the oath of fealty to him went a long way towards settling the fate of Episcopacy in Scotland.

Though the English bishops were eager for the retention of Episcopacy in Scotland, and William seemed at first inclined to support its preservation, he insisted that before he did so, he must be satisfied, "the Episcopal clergy would support his government, and that the Episcopal Church would not be opposed by the bulk of the people." He had good reason to believe that he could not count on the support of the clergy, and there were contradictory reports as to the attitude of the majority of the people towards the Episcopal Church. In the end he decided to leave the whole matter in the hands of the Convention about to assemble, as the best representative of the feelings of the nation.^b

The convention opened its proceedings on 14th March 1689,

a. Cunningham: The Church History of Scotland Vol. 11. p. 155.

b. " " " " " " Vol. 11. p. 158.

and was composed of nine prelates, forty-two peers, forty-nine members for counties, and fifty representatives of burghs.

During the sitting of the Convention various resolutions were passed in regard to the vacancy of the throne and the calling of William and Mary, and these were embodied in a "Claim of Right". The resolution in relation to Episcopacy was as follows:—"That Prelacy and the superiority of any office in the Church above Presbyters is, and hath been, a great and unsupportable grievance and trouble to this nation, and contrary to the inclination of the generality, ever since the Reformation (they having reformed from Popery by Presbyters) and therefore ought to be abolished."

These resolutions were only opposed by nine members, seven of whom were ^a bishops.

It was not till about the middle of July that "an act was passed abolishing Episcopacy as a great grievance to the nation, and declaring that their Majesties, with the consent of the Estates, would establish such a Church government as would be agreeable to the inclinations of the people."^b

Though Episcopacy was thus overthrown, it was not till the April of the next year that parliament met and passed the acts which established the Church of Scotland on a Presbyterian basis. It abolished the Act of 1669, which had made the King supreme "over all persons and in all causes." It passed an act "to restore all the Presbyterian ministers who had been ejected from their livings for not complying with Prelacy." It next ratified the "Westminster Confession of Faith", and revived the Act of 1592. It also repealed

"all the laws in favour of Episcopacy, and placed the government
a. Cunningham; The Church History of Scotland. Vol 11. p. 161.
b. " " " " " " Vol. 11. p. 171.

of the Church in the hands of the ministers "who were ejected for nonconformity, on and after the 1st January 1661, and were now restored, and those who had been or should be admitted by them."^a It also appointed the General Assembly to meet,^a which it did on the 16th November of the same year, being the first^b Assembly held for forty years.

It was not, however, until some eight years later that the effect of the Revolution began to be felt by the Church in Shetland. Even the news of the Revolution was slow in reaching the Islands. Though this took place in November 1688, nothing was heard of it there till the May of the following year, when a Scottish skipper who happened to be in Lerwick over the Sunday, went to the kirk, and was surprised to hear the minister pray for "guid King Jamie." After the service the skipper passed the remark that the minister must be a very ignorant man to pray for a king who had been deposed six months ago. This remark reached the ears of the local authorities, who immediately had him arrested on a charge of high treason. Fortunately for him official intelligence of the Revolution reached the Islands soon after this,^c and he was released.

During these years the ministers of Shetland continued in their parishes, as if no change had taken place, and the authorities of the Church in Shetland, following the example of the Church in Scotland, accepted the validity of episcopal ordination

a. Cunningham: The Church History of Scotland Vol. 11. p. 174-5.

b. " " " " " " Vol. 11. p. 177.

c. R. Cowie: Guide to Shetland p. 55.

unquestioningly.^a

In 1698 six of the ministers in Shetland petitioned the General Assembly to be received into Presbyterian communion, with what result in each case, we will see later when we come to consider the individual parishes. The action of the ministers in question was no doubt prompted to some extent by the belief that the Assembly would not overlook much longer their failure to comply with its demands, and that if they did not submit before it took action they would in all probability be deposed and lose their livings.

In 1700 the General Assembly took steps to bring the Church in Zetland, Orkney and Caithness into line with that of Scotland. On 17th February of that year the General Assembly gave a commission to some of its members to visit Zetland, Orkney and Caithness. This action was the result of letters from certain of the Brethren who stressed the need for a visitation. The members of the Commission were Mr James Hart at Ratho, Mr John Brand at Borrowstouness, Mr John Sandilands at Dolphington, Mr Alexander Lauder at Mordingtoun, Mr James Graham at Holm in Orkney, Mr Patrick Guthrie at Sanday there, Mr William Blaw at Westray there, ministers, and Samuel Maclelan, Stewart Principal of Orkney and Zetland, Ruling Elder, eight in all. Their business was primarily to visit Zetland and assist the Brethren of the Presbytery to put the Church on a proper basis. The Brethren that lived South of the Tay were to

a. Gifford: Historical Description of Shetland. p.30.

meet in Edinburgh on 1st April next, and be in readiness to take their voyage, and with the first fair wind thereafter to go to Zetland. The Commission had the power to choose its own moderator and clerk, and was to carry out the instructions committed to it by the Assembly, and is to report to the next General Assembly.^a

Brand, one of the Commissioners, has given an interesting account of the voyage to Orkney and Shetland, a journey fraught with many dangers and terrifying experiences for landsmen unacquainted with these northern seas.

The first part of the voyage was uneventful. They left Leith in a small sailing ship on Friday 12th April 1700 about one o'clock in the morning, and sailed up the east coast of Scotland. On the Sunday they held services, which were attended by the crew and passengers, and put into Holms-Sound about 7 o'clock on the next night. The ship's crew declared that they had never had a better or pleasanter passage.

The Commission stayed in Kirkwall from 16th to 27th April and carried out there the instructions given to it for Orkney by the General Assembly.

They then hired an open boat, probably a sixereen, to go to Shetland, as the ship in which they had come to Orkney had to return South. They accordingly set out for Sanda about thirty miles north-east from Kirkwall, which was to be their first stop on the way to Shetland. They left Kirkwall about 2 in the afternoon of 27th April. Part of the way the crew rowed with six oars, but when the wind became more favourable they hoisted the

a. Acts of the General Assembly 1700: Church Law Society p.295-6.

sail, and used only four oars. The wind, however, gradually increased in force, and by the time they came near the landing place at Sanda, the waves were so high they could not see the island at times. In spite of the heavy sea, however, they were all landed safely between nine and ten that night.

They had to wait in Sanda from 27th April to 9th May for a favourable wind. On the latter date they went across to the Isle of Eda, lying a little to the west of Sanda, where their boat was, but before they could get aboard the wind shifted to the south-east, and then to east by south, and they were not able to put to sea till 11th May. On that date they set sail, but had to return owing to a change in the wind. Sunday was spent in holding services on the Isle.

On Monday they went on board once more, but as soon as they got out to sea, a storm came up from the west, and soon there was a heavy sea running, and the waves began to break over the boat, and they gave themselves up for lost. At last, however, they found the shelter of a bay, and waited there until the weather moderated. They set out once more about seven in the evening, and the wind was now so light they had to use oars.

On Tuesday morning, May 14th about one or two O'clock, the wind shifted east-south-east, and then to north-east, and worked up to a gale, and they were compelled to put back to Stronza Road in Sanda, and reached port just in time. The wind blew so hard that they had to keep within doors, and had they still been at sea they would certainly have perished. They were so discouraged by all this adverse weather, that they were undecided whether to make

another attempt or return home. After prayer, they resolved to try again. On Friday 17th May between eight and nine in the morning they put to sea, and passed the Fair Isle about 5 O'clock in the afternoon. The gale increased but continued fair at south-west, and they made good progress. About midnight they passed Sumburgh Head, which is twenty-four miles from Lerwick. A mist came up, and they nearly ran on some rocks. They then sailed through Mousa Sound up to Bressay Sound, and arrived in Lerwick on Saturday, about four in the morning.

The Commission stayed in Shetland from 18th May to 11th June.^a The return journey was quick and uneventful.

On their way back to Edinburgh they visited Caithness, and thereafter handed in their report to the General Assembly. It was handed to a Committee appointed to consider it, and report to the Assembly. On 5th March 1701 this Committee presented its report to the Assembly, and after hearing it, the Assembly approved the proceedings and conclusions of the Commission, contained in its register, and also ratified them. The members of the Commission were then called in, and thanked by the Assembly for their good services.^b

It cannot but be regretted that no trace can be found of the Commission's report which consisted of one hundred and ninety pages, as apart from Brand's account of the visit of the Commission, and certain original documents in the Church of Scotland Library, Edinburgh, copies of which appear as appendices to this thesis,

a. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc, Chapter 1.

b. Acts of the General Assembly 1701. Xll.

there is practically no information as to the work done by the Commission in Shetland. The result of this visit, as a whole, however, was that the Church in Shetland was re-organised on a Presbyterian basis, and that the majority of the ministers signed the Confession of Faith.^a

The last episcopal clergyman of this period in these Islands was a minister named Hunter. He was greatly endeared to his people, chiefly landowners, by the faithful discharge of his duties, often at the imminent risk of his life on those boisterous seas. He had an episcopal church at Lunna, and from there travelled all over the Islands, and ministered to many of the landowners who still clung to Episcopacy, and held services in their homes. The Presbyterians called him "Pack Billy", as he always carried a change of raiment with him.^b

While Brand gives practically no information as to the work of the Commission, he does narrate much that is of interest in connection with the parishes themselves, and his general observations are of considerable help to the better understanding of the religious life of the community at this time.

The parishes are again taken in the same order as previously, and the principal authorities used in the accounts given of them and their ministers, are the original records and papers in the Church of Scotland, ^{Library} Edinburgh, Brand, and the Fasti.

a. Gifford: Historical Description of Zetland. p.30.

b. Catton: The History and Description of the Shetland Islands. p.33.

It has to be borne in mind, as has already been stated, that there are no Presbytery and Kirk Session records available as far as Shetland is concerned, till the beginning of the eighteenth century, at the very earliest.

Bressay Burra and Quarff. Bressay is **described** as lying to the

east of Tingwall and Lerwick. It is about five miles long and two broad. It is mostly covered with heather, but there is some corn-land near the coasts. There are three churches in the parish, but only two of them in Bressay, the third being in Burra. Only one of the churches in Bressay is used for worship, and there is a manse near it, originally built for the comfort of the late old minister. The church in Burra is visited by the minister every second Sunday. Burra is near the Main (Mainland), is about three miles long, and is divided into two small isles by a seabreak. The church is very large and has a high steeple on it.^a

Brand does not mention Quarff which is on the Mainland, and formed part of this parish.

The minister of this parish was Hugh Leigh, and as has been stated on a previous occasion, was admitted to it in 1670. In 1698 he petitioned the General Assembly to be received into Presbyterian communion. He was admitted on 23rd June of the same year. In 1702 he was suspended for beating his wife, but was
"reposed by a committee of Synod August 1704."^b

Dunrossness and Fair Isle. Dunrossness is on the Main to the south,

which lies next to Orkney and Scotland. Service is held in three

a. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc p.143-4.

b. Fasti Vol. VII p.280.

churches in this parish, viz:- Cross Kirk, Sandwick and Fair Isle^a
 To the north of the Ness lies St Ninian's Isle. It is described
 as very pleasant. There is a chapel, and in it an altar where^b
 candles are burned by superstitious people.

Fair Isle. This island lies about twenty-four miles to the south, or
 south by east of Sumburgh Head. The minister visits the island once
 a year in the summertime, and remains there about a month. He spends
 his time in preaching, visiting and baptising. For the rest of the
 year this part of the parish is without public ordinances.^c

James Kay, who was admitted to this parish in 1682, petitioned
 the General Assembly in 1698 to be received into Presbyterian
 communion. In this petition he disclaimed Episcopacy, and declared
 he had never taken part in the late persecution. He was admitted^d
 on 23rd June of the same year. He died on 15th September 1716.

Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale. This parish lies on the Main to
 the north of Dunrossness. It has four churches, Tingwall, Whiteness,
 Weisdale and Lerwick. The minister preaches regularly in Tingwall,
 Whiteness and Weisdale, but does not feel obliged to preach in
 Lerwick by turns, as it has only been built lately at the expense
 of the inhabitants of the town. He does, however, go there^e
 occasionally to preach and baptise children.

The church at Weisdale is a resort for the superstitious.

a Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc. p.125.

b. " " " " " " " p.126.

c. " " " " " " " p.127-8.

d. Fasti Vol. VII. p.283.

e. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc. p.130.

They light candles in it, and drop money in and about it, and go round it on their bare knees. They also have recourse to it when sick, and think that if they even turn their faces towards it when in distress, God will hear them. It is also frequented by women who desire to marry, for they believe that if they say their prayers within this building God will send them a husband.^a

John Gowdie who died in May 1688 was succeeded by Andrew Liddell, who was probably a brother of John Liddell, the minister of Hobkirk. He was educated at the University of Glasgow, and took the degree of M.A; on 3rd July 1682. He passed "his trials before the Presbytery of Jedburgh, and was recommended for licence 4th March 1685."^b He was admitted to this parish on 31st May 1689.

He was succeeded by "William Binning, a native of Buchan," who "was educated at King's College, Aberdeen." He took the degree of M.A; on 15th July 1686. He was "licensed by the Presbytery in 1689; and was 'appointed Schoolmaster at Scalloway that year,' and "called to Tingwall, Whiteness, Weisdale and Gulberwick, where he continued two years." He then got another living, which cannot be identified.

Whether he held this other living, while still retaining Tingwall is not known. He was evidently placed in Tingwall at the first without being ordained, for in 1694 he was ordained by "one of the late pretended bishops" and installed there. In January 1698 he petitioned the General Assembly to be received into Presbyterian communion, and was admitted "because of the paucity of ministers," in the same year. He died in September

^c
1703 aged about thirty-seven.

a. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc p.138-9

b. Fasti Vol. VII p.291.

c. Fasti Vol. VII. p.291.

Lerwick. Very little is known about Lerwick till the visit of the ----- Commission in 1700. In the Fasti John Carnegie is mentioned as connected with Lerwick in 1699. He had been admitted to the parish of Fetlar in 1694. John Craigie is called "late minister of Lerwick" in a Sasine Register Sept 1701, but nothing is known as to the actual relation of these ministers to Lerwick. The events following closely on the Commission's visit, however, can be traced fairly accurately from the records of the Commission of Assembly 1700-1702, and from several old papers which are in the Library of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Sometime during their stay in Shetland, which lasted from 18th May to 11th June 1700, the Commissioners met with the Presbytery to discuss with representatives of the Lerwick church the question of the disjunction of Lerwick from the parish of Tingwall, in order that it might be erected into a separate parish.

Brand gives an interesting account of the town itself, and proceeds to narrate the reasons which prompted the people of Lerwick to take steps for the severance of their church from the parish of Tingwall.

He describes Lerwick as more than half a mile in length, and containing between two and three hundred families. The people are of an obliging temper, being very civil and kind, and there are very few beggars among them, there being a great supply of small fishes for their necessity. They have built for themselves at their own expense a convenient church at the back or the middle of the town, and furnished it with good seats. They are moreover, anxious to be disjoined from Tingwall that they may

have a minister of their own. Towards this end they are most willing to contribute towards the stipend of a minister, but as they cannot provide the whole of the stipend, they intend to ask the Government to make them an allowance out of the Bishopric rents. Brand goes on to say that the Commission approved of this proposal as very necessary, and told the representatives they would recommend it to the Commission of the General Assembly. The reasons which led them to give their warm approbation to this scheme were (1) The importance of the town itself, it being the principal one in the country, and frequented by the gentry, and also by strangers in the summertime. (2) The lack of Gospel ordinances, as their minister seldom preached in Lerwick. (3) The difficulty of going to Tingwall to worship especially in the wintertime. (4) The lack of ordinances is responsible for the ignorance and sin which abounds, and especially for the horrid profanation of the Lord's Day by the inhabitants and strangers, and obstructs the conversion of souls.

Accordingly on 15th June 1700 a petition to the General Assembly for the disjunction of Lerwick from Tingwall was drawn up and signed by heritors, elders, and representative inhabitants, and forwarded to the authorities in Edinburgh, and three of their number Baylie Andrew Bruce, Mr Samuel Urquhart, and Mr William Henderson of Garder were appointed to act on behalf of the congregation, and approach the Lords of the Commission of Parliament for Plantation of Kirks, and urge them seriously to consider the said report, and grant the disjunction of the town

129-132.

a. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc. p. ~~130-1~~.

of Lerwick from Tingwall in all time coming.^a

On 19th November 1700 a call was given to the Reverend John Sandilands, minister of the parish of Dolphington, who had been one of the commissioners to Shetland.^a This was done before the petition for the severance of Lerwick from Tingwall had been dealt with by the General Assembly, and before any definite steps had been taken to secure an adequate stipend for the minister. Mr Sandilands had undoubtedly made a great impression on the people of Lerwick during his stay among them, and they appear to have been very eager to secure him as their minister.

This call was sustained by the Presbytery of Zetland on the same day, and the Rev. William Binning, minister of Tingwall signed the extract minute as Moderator of the Presbytery.^a

The reasons that prompted the congregation of Lerwick to give this call are set out in a separate document, that was forwarded along with the call.

In the introduction to these reasons it is claimed that while ministers of the Gospel are settled in particular congregations and appointed over their own flocks for the sake of order and convenience, yet as members of the Catholic Church, they may be sent by the Church authorities wherever they may be most useful.

The particular reasons for the call are then set out.

In the first place the Assembly have shown their interest in the North by the various Acts they have passed for the planting of the Kirk there, and in particular by their sending a commission to visit the Islands of Shetland.

In the second place Lerwick had become during the last forty years a very important town with a population of seven hundred inhabitants, besides those living on its outskirts. Sometimes as many as eight hundred fishing boats are in the harbour at one time, apart from other ships driven there from stress of weather in their coming and going to the Indies and other places. The town is steadily growing, and is far more important than Dolphington, being the chief post in the country of Zetland, and the seat of the Presbytery.

In the third place it is dangerous to take children to Tingwall to be baptised, especially in the winter, as then the way is almost impassable.

In the fourth place many strangers who visit Lerwick, comment adversely on the fact that there is no settled minister in Lerwick

In the fifth place the people of Lerwick are of the opinion that Mr Sandilands would be of invaluable assistance to the Presbytery of Zetland, owing to the fact that he is well acquainted with the forms and procedure of the Church, which many of the ministers in Shetland are not, and as he is well known in the South, would be a fit person to handle all matters of the Church that have to be referred to the authorities in Scotland.

Lastly, after hearing him preach, and having conversation with him, the people of Lerwick are convinced that he is a very fit person for the post to which he has been called.^a

The call, however, was not brought before the Presbytery of Biggar until 12th February 1702, some fifteen months later. The delay was caused by the fact, that it was some considerable time before Lerwick was disjoined from Tingwall, and the call was held up until this was done. As will be seen later, it was claimed by the representatives of the Dolphington congregation that even then the call was not valid.

On 3rd March 1701 another petition from the Lerwick congregation came before the Commission of Assembly, praying for the disjunction of Lerwick from Tingwall.

The Committee for Bills moved that it should be granted, and this being done, the Committee nominated for the affairs of Zetland brought in a draft of an address to His Majesty in favour of the town of Lerwick. This was read and unanimously approved, and the Moderator was authorised to sign it, and that thereafter it should be forwarded to the Secretaries of State for the Kingdom of Scotland.

In this address the reasons given in the document which accompanied the call to Mr Sandilands, and in the petition addressed to the General Assembly, are embodied.

It points out that in 1700 the General Assembly sent up a Commission to Zetland with a view to settling the affairs of the Church there, and that on that occasion the inhabitants of Lerwick represented to the Commission and Presbytery, met in conjunction, that although only forty years ago there were only four families in Lerwick, there were now about seven hundred inhabitants in the town, and that the distance between Lerwick and Tingwall, where

their parish kirk was situated, was great and the way impassable in the winter. The Commission had accordingly made a perambulation of the parish of Tingwall, and found that a new erection was necessary. The address then proceeds to give the reasons that make this new erection necessary.

First of all the parish is too large for one minister. It is eighteen miles long and nine miles broad, and contains about two thousand people besides the inhabitants of Lerwick.

Secondly, the people of Lerwick have to take their children to Tingwall to be baptised, and this involves great danger, as the way is impassable in the winter. So great is the risk to the children, that the parents take their dead-clothes with them, and as a matter of fact several children have died from the effects of this journey, and it was this danger that induced the late Bishop of Orkney to authorise a Deacon to baptise at Lerwick.

In the third place, a great many ships visit Lerwick, there being as many as seven or eight hundred Holland Busses lying at one time in Bressay Sound, and also many merchant ships come in there for shelter, on their way to and from the Indies and other places. Many of the sailors of these ships, especially those belonging to the Busses understand English, and attend worship in the church at Lerwick.

Next, the steps taken by the Commission of Assembly to disjoin Lerwick from Tingwall are narrated, and it is pointed out that although this has been done, the matter of settling a minister in Lerwick cannot be proceeded with until the grant already applied for, viz:— 500 merks Scots from the rents of the Bishopric

of Orkney, is forthcoming. The people of Lerwick themselves are willing to contribute 300 merks to the stipend. They have already called a minister, but the Judicatories cannot transport him until a competent stipend be assured him.

Finally, the address stresses the importance of there being a settled minister at Lerwick. The want of a minister there is not only prejudicial to the town itself, but to the whole country, as Lerwick is the chief town thereof. This lack creates an unfavourable impression on strangers, and the inhabitants themselves are as sheep without a shepherd. The absence of Gospel ordinances and church discipline, moreover is the cause of the profanation of the Sabbath, and of immorality of all kinds, to the great dishonour of the Christian Reformed Religion, and reproach of the government both of state and church in the land.

The Commission of Assembly concludes its address by humbly beseeching His Majesty to add this gift to His other Royal munificence to the Church, as a lasting instance of His Majesty's care and bounty to the Church, even in the remotest parts of his dominion.^a

The prayer of the petition was granted, and a sum of 500 merks Scots was allocated from the Bishopric Rents of Orkney to the stipend of the minister of Lerwick.

On 12th March 1702 the call from Lerwick to the Rev. John Sandilands of Dolphington was brought before the Presbytery of Biggar, and the call and the accompanying reasons were handed to Mr Sandilands, and he was asked to communicate the same to the
a. Appendix A.

parish of Dolphington, and cited to compear before the Presbytery^a on 26th February.

On 26th February the call came again before the Presbytery of Biggar, and Benjamin Allane, writer in Edinburgh, appeared on behalf of Lerwick to prosecute the call. He produced a commission from John Blair, Kirk Agent, empowering him to do this, which was read and sustained.

The minister and the Laird of Dolphington alos appeared in the interests of the congregation.

The Laird of Dolphington gave in a paper containing answers to the reasons advanced by Lerwick for calling Mr Sandilands.

This reply by the parishioners of Dolphington begins with the statement that though this call is both irritating and vexatious to them and their minister, they desire to approach the matter without passion, in a spirit of reasonableness and Gospel meekness. They seem, however, to have found it very difficult, if not impossible, to live up to their high ideal in the course of the argument.

They first of all deal with the call itself, and then proceed to answer the reasons given by the Lerwick congregation for calling Mr Sandilands.

In the first place they contend that the call is illegal, as Lerwick, at the time the call was signed, had not the power to give a call, being still a part of the parish of Tingwall, and moreover to call Mr Sandilands to Lerwick under these circumstances, was to invite him to intrude upon another man's parish.

This latter objection had evidently not occurred to the minister of Tingwall, for he had presided over the meeting at which the call was given, and had not protested in any way against the call as being an infringement of his rights.

In the second place they criticise the call as revealing a lack of harmony. They point out that there are about seven hundred people in Lerwick, whereof there are some forty heritors, and twelve elders and deacons, and yet only twenty people have signed the call. This is not a very encouraging start for a minister called to such a difficult post.

They then pass on to the reasons given for the call, and comment first of all on what they designate the preface to the reasons.

They do not deny the lawfulness of the transportation of ministers from one congregation to another, but hint that there has been too much indiscriminate transportation in the past, and hope that this will cease now, as there is really no longer any need for it. There are at present many well qualified, and godly young probationers, who are quite capable of filling the vacancies that occur, and Lerwick has failed utterly to comply with those Acts that have particular reference to the North, as that particular vacant parishes should first essay to plant themselves with a probationer.

In the next place they hold the Church, even in an extreme case of transportation, never intended to offer violence to nature, or dissolve the closest bonds of family life, and that is just what would happen if this transportation were insisted upon. The

minister, a widower, would either have to leave his children behind him, and thus be cut off from them, or take them with him to their almost certain death. They quite admit that godly persons, and especially ministers, should be prepared to sacrifice if need be, but that they can see no reason for this in the present instance, for to send Mr Sandilands to Lerwick would be to shorten his days, and thus rob the Church of his services.

The reasons are now examined one by one.

The answer to Lerwick's first reason that the General Assembly have made many Acts for the right planting of the North, and have recently sent a Commission to Shetland, is "Lerwick claims all the benefits of the Acts of Assemblie in favour of the North because there is no mention made of them in the list of privileged posts that have benefited of the expedite way of calling from the South."

As to the visit of the Commission they reply that Lerwick ought to be grateful to the parish of Dolphington for the loan of their minister, who cheerfully and willingly went North in the interests of Shetland, instead of seeking "him a second time to the jeopardy of his life, the life of his children, and the great grief of us his obedient loving people."

Their answer to the second reason is that they quite realize that an important place like Lerwick should have a minister, but that they should have Mr Sandilands is weak reasoning. Dolphington lies upon one of the most important post roads of the kingdom, and every Sunday there are a considerable number of strangers

in church, which calls for a minister of parts.

Their answer to the third reason is that Lerwick's disjunction from Tingwall proves that only now are they capable of calling a minister, and that therefore this call should fall, and that they should now call someone else, "as shall consist more with mercy, gratitude, and the probability of obtaining and holding the same."

Their answer to the fourth reason that the want of a minister stumbles strangers, Hollanders and Hamburgers, is that the people of Lerwick have not gone about the matter in the right way to remove that stumbling block. Even if they succeeded in getting the minister of Dolphington (which God forbid!) it would be two years, owing to certain circumstances of the minister, before they could get possession of him, which delay would continue to give offence to strangers, and it would reveal a cruel humour in the people of Lerwick "to say they will have no other, but with danger of the loss of his life and small familie, whilst they may be served nearer the door."

Their answer to the fifth reason for the call, Mr Sandilands' fitness for the post on account of "his prudent carriage, good gift of preaching, with management of affairs while he was in Zetland," and "his capacity to entertain correspondence with the South, if he were settled at Lerwick etc," is that they leave this to the minister to deal with, only that they were well aware of these qualifications long before Lerwick, but are surprised that the people of Lerwick have made no mention of "his piety and exemplarie use of life and conversation", qualifications of which they should have been convinced before they called him, as the

people of Dolphington were ten years ago, when they asked him to be their minister.

After voicing the hope that the Presbytery will decide in favour of the people of Dolphington, and expressing the pious wish that the Lord of the Vineyard will "give help to the Lord's people of Lerwick, by the hand of whom He will send," the framers of this reply go on to make a few general observations.

First of all their minister has proved himself very useful on the Assembly's commissions and committees. He has always shown himself an obedient son of the Church, when others have "disobeyed, shifted, yea slighted, and contemned appointments of that kind." It would be a bad reward to banish him from his native land into a strange country, and deprive him of all his friendships, for the cheerful and obedient service he has rendered to the Church, and it will not be much encouragement to others to follow his example if he is to be penalised in this way. It will also deprive the Church of his future services on commissions and committees.

It should also be borne in mind that the maintenance of the minister at Lerwick is uncertain, and that if Mr Sandilands is transported there it may mean the ruin of himself and his family, especially if war should come, which at present seems inevitable. The country has not yet got over the effects of the last war, and if another war breaks, it will be very difficult to raise the portion of stipend to be contributed by Lerwick, as especially as the people have not had to contribute in this way before.

The situation also at Dolphington is peculiar. The stipend

is not adequate, and the minister would have been at great loss in recent years, had he not received an additional salary as Clerk of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, and if he is transported to Lerwick, his successor will have a much smaller stipend to live on, as the parish cannot be expected to provide the Synod with another well qualified Clerk.^a

It is evident from all these answers that the congregation was very much attached to its minister, and resentful of any attempt being made by another parish to take him from it, and was not above using some very dubious arguments in the hope of inducing the Presbytery to refuse to sustain the call.

The minister also handed in his own reasons for declining the call.

In his statement he declares that he adheres to the answers of his own parishioners to the reasons given by the Lerwick congregation for calling him, whilst modestly deprecating the glowing tributes paid to his own qualifications.

He regrets that the people of Lerwick should have ever thought of calling one so unworthy as himself. If he thought, however, that it was his duty to go, he would do so even at the risk of shortening his days, but his circumstances render his going impracticable. He says that it goes very near to his heart to expose his five motherless children, and his aged mother to the ruin and destruction that such a transportation would involve. Yet if there were no one else to fill this post, he would feel culpable if he laid anything in the way of his going. He believes, however,

a. Appendix A.

there are many young men better circumstanced, and better qualified to take up this work.

Remembering vividly his dreadful experience in the open boat between Orkney and Shetland, he declares himself the worst sailor in the world, and calls on his brethren who were with him on that occasion to bear witness to the misery he endured.

He then concludes with these words:-

"I shall not any longer take up the precious time of this Judicatorie. Let one only weigh my inability both of body and mind for that important post, whereby the interest of Christ cannot but be exposed; 2nd, My circumstances with respect to my family; 3rdly, what ground there is to suspect that the harmony may no longer live of this call; Lastly, the inconsiderableness and uncertainty of maintenance, there being neither manse, nor glebe, nor security of stipend.

Let every one of my impartial Judges put their own souls in my soul's place, then I shall not be afraid of having ever any cruel and insupportable burdens." ^a

In the Fasti it is stated that he married Margaret Sandilands who died 27th May 1730 aged 75, thus surviving him ^b ten years, for he died in 1720 aged 55 years. It will have been noticed, however, that in the above statement he speaks of his "five motherless children." It is evident therefore, that either the information in the Fasti is incorrect, or Margaret Sandilands was his second wife.

a. Appendix A.

b. Fasti Vol. 1. p. 251.

The Presbytery, after hearing the arguments of both sides and taking everything into consideration, found it very difficult to come to a decision, and finally voted to refer the whole matter to the next General Assembly to meet at Edinburgh the sixth day of March 1702, if it were found to be sitting on or after the tenth day of the said month, and if not, to the next ensuing Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale.

The parties were then called in and the motion was read in their hearing, and all parties were then cited apud acta by the Moderator to compear before the Assembly the tenth day of March with continuation of days.

Thereupon Mr Sandilands protested, and took instruments and appealed to the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale on the following grounds, viz: -

- (1) There were not ten free days betwixt the foresaid reference, and the setting down of the next General Assembly.
- (2) Because the Reverend Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale is the next immediate superior Judicatorie, and also are far better acquaint with Mr Sandilands his qualifications and circumstances than any General Assembly can be.

The Laird of Dolphington likewise protested in his own name, and in the name of the parish, and thereupon took instruments. ^a

On 11th March 1702 the Committee for Bills heard the reference, parties were called, and there compeared John Blair, Agent for the Kirk, pursuer, Mr John Sandilands etc; the opinion was that the matter was competent to go before the Assembly, and so the protest fell to the ground. ^a

On 17th March 1702 the reference from the Biggar Presbytery with regard to the call from Lerwick to Mr John Sandilands came before the Commission of Assembly. Parties were called, and compeared John Blair, Agent for the Church, pursuer; compeared also the said Mr John Sandilands himself, and Dr Andrew Brown of Dolphington. A Committee was appointed by the Commission to confer with Mr Sandilands, and also with Mr James Buchan, concerning the case of Shetland, and thereafter to bring in an overture anent the said affair.

On the following day the Committee gave in its report which was adopted.

They were of opinion that Mr Sandilands should be sent in mission to Shetland to supply the kirk of Lerwick, and other vacancies for three months and more, if he could, and that in the meantime the stipend of Lerwick be better secured, and pairs taken thereanent, and that he may have an opportunity to converse with the people, and inquire into the affairs of that country and report to the Commission.

His own church was to be supplied by the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, and his office of Clerk to be reserved for him till he returned. He was to receive 300 merks out of the public money to defray the charges of the voyage; that he should go thither as soon as he could, and that an encouraging letter should be written to the people of Lerwick, showing the Commission's concern for them.^a

a. Appendix A.

In reply to the letter from the Commission of Assembly, Mr Andrew Bruce of Lerwick wrote to the Moderator of the Commission of Assembly, the Very Reverend Mr David Williamson, on the 7th May 1702, and thanked him in his own name, and in the name of the inhabitants of Lerwick, for the trouble the Assembly had taken to settle a minister of the Gospel among them, and obtain for them the King's gift, i.e. the five hundred merks per annum towards the stipend of the minister. Pleasure is also expressed at the appointment of Mr Sandilands to Lerwick, and assurance given that they will do all in their power to encourage him and implement their promises. Mention is also made of a Mr Barham, who had come to Shetland, a minister who had justified himself a servant sent^a of Jesus Christ.

The last stage in this long drawn out business was reached on 13th May 1702, when Mr Sandilands intimated to the Commission of Assembly, that since the last meeting of the Commission, he had not had an opportunity of going to Zetland, though he ~~had~~ waited a month to that effect, and now that the wars had broken out (the Spanish War of Succession) he could not expect one. The Commission of the General Assembly therefore excused him from going till further order.^a

As a matter of fact he never went to Lerwick, but remained in Dolphington till he retired from the active service of the ministry.^b

It was not till 6th April 1704 that Lerwick had its first
a. Appendix A.

b. Fasti Vol. 1. p. 251

settled minister in the person of James Mill, who was educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen 1682-86. He died in 1718, and was the father of John Mill, the minister of Dunrossness fame.^a

Fetlar and North Yell. Fetlar lies to the east -north-east of Yell, and is five miles long and four broad. Brand speaks of chapels and Pict houses still to be seen there. There is one church in which the minister of Yell preaches every fourth Sunday. It used to be ministered to by a preaching deacon, but the vicar i.e. the lay-vicar or tacksman of the tithes, had by his diligence "got the minister of Yell also obliged to serve in Fetlar," though Yell itself ^{was} ~~be~~^b too much for one man to look after.

Robert Mowat who was minister of this parish at the time of the Revolution, continued to hold the benefice until his death, which occurred in 1694.^c

He was succeeded by Sir John Carnegie of Pitarrow, the "fourth son of Sir David Carnegie, first baronet of Pitarrow and Catherine Primrose." He was "educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen," and took the degree of M.A; in 1689. He was admitted to this parish about 1694, and continued on 27th March 1698, though his name, however, is not found among the ministers of Shetland, who petitioned the General Assembly to be received into Presbyterian communion. He was probably preacher at Lerwick in 1699. He then seems to have left Shetland and become factor on his father's estate, whom he succeeded in 1708 as the second baronet. He died

a. Fasti Vol VII. p. 285.

b. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc. p.145.

c. Fasti Vol.VII.p.295.

3rd April 1729.^a

Somewhere about the end of the seventeenth century both Fetlar and North Yell were joined to the parish of Mid-Yell and South Yell.^b

Unst or Norwick, Baliasta and Lund. This parish is eight miles long, and at some places four broad. It has three churches, and there are three harbours, Uzia Sound (Uyeasound), Balta Sound, and Burra Firth. In Brand's time several old chapels were still to be seen in the island.^c

Alexander Craig, who left this parish, or was put out of it in 1697, was succeeded by John Catanach. He was a native of Aberdeen, and was educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen. He took the degree of M.A. in 1691. He then became tutor to a boy in Shetland, and was licensed there, after passing his trials before the Presbytery during Episcopacy, which incidentally shows how little Episcopacy was affected in Shetland by the Revolution at this time. When at last the Church in the South began to take steps for the re-establishment of Presbyterianism in the Islands, he secured testimonials from heritors and parishioners in Unst, and went to Edinburgh, where he was recommended to the Commission for Visitation of Orkney and Shetland, and received into Presbyterian communion. "He was licensed again by the Presbytery of Orkney 15th June 1698," and thereafter formally called to this parish. He was ordained by a committee of the Commission, and by

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 296.

b. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 301.

the Presbytery of Kirkwall 23rd August 1698. He died in 1717.^a
Mid Yell or Reafirth. The island of Yell lies north-east, and by
 east from the Mainland. It is a large island some sixteen miles
 long, and in places six to eight miles broad. In Brand's time
 there were three churches, and many little old chapels.^b

Its minister was Robert Ramsay, who was admitted to this
 parish before 5th June 1684, and was ultimately received into
 Presbyterian communion by the Commission of Assembly 1700. He
 "died 10th January 1716 aged about 61." He was a son-in-law of
 Hercules Sinclair, the minister of Northmavine.^c

Delting, Olnafirth and Laxavoe. All that Brand has to say about
 this parish is that it is on the Main, and lies north-east and
 south-west, and has two churches. He further states that on the
 east lies Fishholm, to the north-east Little Rue, and on the west
 Meikle Rue, and remarks vaguely that all these islands have their
 own advantages, but says nothing about the parish itself.^d

Alexander Dunbar, who was translated to this parish before
 7th April 1668, was received into Presbyterian communion, by the
 Commission of the General Assembly, which visited Shetland in 1700.
 He demitted his charge on account of infirmity in March 1706, and
 died 10th September 1708.^e

Nesting and Lunnasting. This parish lies to the east of the
 Mainland, and possesses four churches, of which two are on the

a. Fasti Vol VII. p 299.

b. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc. p.145.

c. Fasti Vol. VII. p.302.

d. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc. p.141.

e. Fasti Vol. VII. p.307.

Mainland, and the other two on islands.

Whalsay, which belongs to this parish, lies to the north-east. It is about three miles long and as many broad. There is a church in it. From Whalsay to the east lies the Skerries, several broken islands, wherein is also a church.^a

Theodore Umphray was admitted to this parish before 22nd July 1657. According to the Fasti he petitioned the General Assembly in January 1698, with five others, to be received into Presbyterian communion, stating "that since he subscribed the Solemn League and Covenant to maintain Presbyterian government, the world could not say he had wavered, that under the unhappy government of bishops they had never persuaded him to take the canonical oath, that he was commissioned by the bishop to moderate in Shetland, but did not, and never had a hand in setting up any episcopal man." Notwithstanding this it was found that he took the Test, and complied with the late defections; he therefore demitted his parish 6th March 1701, "depending on voluntary contributions as recommended by the Assembly and some Synods."^b The discovery, however, of some old records in the Church of Scotland Library, Edinburgh (copies of which will be found in Appendix B of this thesis), proves quite clearly that it was not simply his having taken the Test, which resulted in his finally being refused admission into Presbyterian communion, though it led to the rejection of his petition in 1698.

The Commission appointed by the Assembly of 1700 to visit
a.Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc.p.139.

b.Fasti Vol.Vll p.309.

Shetland, with authority to deal with any matters in the Church that called for attention, among other things, inquired into a charge of immorality made against Mr Theodore Umphray, minister of the parish of Nesting, and suspended him. He himself makes reference to his **suspension** in his resignation dated 6th March 1701, as follows, "and also being sensible that by reason of a process led against me in that countrey, and upon which I was suspended by the late Commission at Zetland."

This charge was dealt with by the Presbytery of Zetland at a meeting held at Lerwick 27th September 1700.

Three witnesses had been summoned to give evidence, but one of them, Margaret Sinclair failed to appear, and it was reported that she had left the country about a year ago. Mr Umphray was asked if he had anything to object to the other two witnesses, why they might not give evidence against him, and replied that as to Jannot Mowatt he had nothing to object to her, but as for Vessica Howatt he protested that she might not be admitted as a witness against him "because it was generally known that the said Vessica was ane proven thief, as could be manifest by the Spalzie Court." As the woman did not deny this, and the Spalzie and elders of the town confirmed Mr Umphray's statement, his objection was sustained.

The other witness, Jannot Mowatt, admitted that her evidence was based on hearsay, and that "she neither saw nor knew any scandalous converse betwixt the said Mr Theodore Umphray and Agnas Magnus-daughter, bot only by common report, so help her God,"

The Presbytery therefore for lack of evidence proceeded no further in the matter.^a

On 6th March 1701 Mr Umphray, being in Edinburgh, gave in his resignation of the united parishes of Nesting, Lunnasting, Whalsay, and Skerries, to the General Assembly then in session.

In his written resignation he states the reasons that have led him to give up his parish. They are two. The first is his infirmity. He says, "being most sensible that I am a very old man towards seventie, and my body turned very valetudinary and weak, whereby I am rendered unable to discharge the weightie duties of the ministrie, especially in those four parishes to which I had relation these 45 years."

His second reason is that his usefulness in Shetland has been impaired by a process which has been brought against him. "Being sensible that by reason of a process led against me in that countrey and upon which I was suspended by the late Commission at Zetland, and that whatever I am able to say in my own defence, I judge I cannot be so usefull in the ministrie in that countrey as is requisite, and being unwilling to stand in the way of the planting or success of the Gospell in that place."^a

His resignation was accepted by the General Assembly, and a special committee was appointed consisting of Mr Patrick Cumming, Mr Thomas Linning, Mr James Ramsay Sr, and Mr James Grahame to confer with Mr Umphray, and consider some way for his relief.

On 11th March 1701 this committee informed the Commission of Assembly that they had^{not} been ready to give in their report before
a. Appendix B.

the rising of the General Assembly, and were appointed to meet that night to consider the matter, and present their report on the following morning.

On 12th March 1701 they reported to the Commission of Assembly that they were of opinion that with regard to the late minister of Nesting the Lords Commissioners of His Majesties Treasury should be applied unto for a gift of the stipend of the said united parishes for the crop and year 1701 (the stipend 1700 being his already) and Lykewayes that the stipends of the united parishes where he formerly served should be burdened with an hundred pounds Scots yearly to be payed to him during his lifetime, and that a letter be written to the Presbytery of Zetland thereanent.

The Commission of Assembly adopted this report, and a letter was accordingly written to the Presbytery of Zetland, informing them what had been done in the matter with regard to Mr Umphray.

This letter also makes mention of two young probationers who are being sent up to Shetland by the Commission of Assembly, and the hope is expressed that the Presbytery will be able to settle them in some of the vacancies, as they did the probationer who was sent up the previous^{year}, and that in the meantime care be taken that they be provided with suitable maintenance as far as the allowances appointed by Act of Parliament can contribute grants."

By July of that year Mr Umphray was again in Shetland,
a. Appendix B.

with the object of getting back into the active ministry of the Church.

On 2nd July 1701 he addressed a petition to the Commission of Assembly, praying to be restored to the public exercise of his ministerial function in Shetland, where he could have a charge that he would be able to manage, "for", he says, "there is nothing in this world that I desire so much, as to live and dye in the service of that Lord to whom I once engaged myself, and that I may redeem the time, and double my diligence for the edifying of the Church."

In his petition he expresses the hope that the fact that he demitted his former parish "as not being longer able for the travel and fatigue of that charge, now in my decaying age" will not be taken as meaning that he has given up all thought of the active ministry, and declares that had he had the opportunity he would have approached the Brethren to see if he could not be admitted to an easier charge, "for" he declares, "though I be farr on in years, yet I bless God I have some ability yet both of body and mynd for the discharge of my doutie, and hope that merciful Lord who has called me to preach his Gospel, though unworthie, will not leave me in my old age nor put ane end to my days till my work be done, for he knows best his works with me, and what work He hath yet for me to be done before I go hence and be no more here."

He also refers to the charge made against him, and maintains that it has fallen to the ground. "As for any scandell wherewith I was charged, there is nothing proven against

me that can be laid hold on for my disadvantage by any person that is not possessed with prejudice and void of charitie, for I am exculpat by all the witnesses that have been had, either for me or aganst me, and therefore the scandell is taken away."

This petition came before the Commission of Assembly on 4th September 1701, and after being read, it was remitted to " Mr George Meldrum, Mr Patrick Cuming, Mr James Ramsay at Eyemouth, nominate to consider anent Zetland, to consider this petition at 4 O'clock in Mr George Meldrum's chamber, and it is lykewayes remitted to the same Committee to consider what is furdur necessary to be done by the Commission with reference to Lerwick in Zetland."

This last sentence refers to the matter of the call given by the Lerwick congregation to the Rev. John Sandilands of Dolphington, a matter that at this time was before the General Assembly.

The Committee thereupon considered the petition of Mr Umphray, and other matters entrusted to them, and brought in their report to the Commission of Assembly the same day, which on being read, was "unanimously agreed to and approved by the Commission." In their report the Committee stated that they had found that Mr Umphray had himself declared in his letter to the General Assembly demitting his parish that he was "sensible that by reason of a process led against him he could not be so useful in the ministry in that countrey as is requisite," and for that reason and many others the Committee were of opinion that the prayer of his petition could not be granted, and recommended that a letter

be written to the Presbytery of Zetland, giving them an account of his position, and the Commissioners' deliverance thereon, and to inform them the Commissioners were surprised to learn from a letter written by Mr Umphray to Charles Mitchell, writer here, that he had received a call from a parish within their bounds. The Commissioners were sure, however, that no member of the Presbytery had had a hand in the matter, but warned them to be very careful in the future not to concur in a call to him or to anyone in like circumstances. That it was only out of pity to him and his family that they had accepted his demission, and had not taken steps with a view to his deposition. It was, moreover, because he had declared that he had resolved to go out of the Kingdom, that the Assembly had taken no further steps against him, but now that he had taken this course, it was the Committee's opinion that the Presbytery should watch his conduct closely, and if he behaved any more irregularly, censure him, and report to the Commission their diligence therein.

A letter was written to the Presbytery to this effect, in which two other matters are mentioned.

The first refers to two probationers, Mr George Duncan, and Mr John Cuming, who had been sent to Shetland with a view to their being settled there. The Commissioners are sure the Presbytery will do all in their power to encourage them, and find parishes for them without delay, and exhorts them to treat kindly those that are sent to Shetland by the superior Judicatories, who are far from their relations, friends and acquaintances. Both of these probationers settled in Shetland, Mr George Duncan being inducted

into the parish of Walls in 1701,^a and Mr John Cuming into the parish of Sandsting and Aithsting in the following year.^b

The second matter relates to the transportation of Mr John Sandilands to Lerwick. The Presbytery are informed that the process anent Mr Sandilands' transportation is not yet through, but that everything is being done to hasten it on.

It is clear from the Commission of Assembly's action in relation to Mr Umphray, that they were far from convinced that he was innocent of the charge laid against him, and were determined he should not be admitted into Presbyterian communion.

Northmavine and Ollaberry. This parish lies in the north of the ----- Mainland. There are three kirks in it, one at Hillswick, another at Ollaberry, and the third at North Roe. Brand says of this parish "They report the people of this parish to be discreet and civilised beyond their neighbouring parishes, which under God is owing to the labours of Mr Hercules Sinclair, sometime minister there, reported to be zealous and faithful."^c

It was this Mr Sinclair, as has already been related, who caused the Cross Kirk at Eshaness to be razed to the ground because of the superstitions associated with it.

Brand goes on to say "there are also many mo people in this parish who can write and read, and give a tolerable account of their proficiency in the knowledge of the principles of religion than there are in others."^c

James Rose, who was admitted to this parish before 1681, died in 1690. There was apparently a vacancy of ten years,
a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 317.
b. " " " p. 315.
c. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc. p. 142-3.

for the next minister, James Buchan, was not inducted until 1700. He was born in 1659, and educated at King's College, Aberdeen. He took the degree of M.A; in 1696, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Dalkeith on 23rd January 1700. On 4th August 1700 he received a call to the parish of Northmavine and Ollaberry, and was ordained at Lerwick on 29th September of that year. In 1706 he tendered his resignation of the parish "from conscientious scruples as to his acceptability, but his resignation was not accepted." He died on 27th January ¹⁷²⁷, bequeathing £25 sterling, ^a the interest of which was to be given to people in the parish who were in reduced in circumstances, but formerly had been "in a more affluent state than the ordinary poor."

Sandsting and Aithsting. This parish lies between Delting and Walls, ----- and there are two Kirks in it. Brand in his comment on this parish says, "The way in this parish is very bad, and the people are said to be among the poorest and naughtiest." ^b

Cornelius Barron, who was admitted to this parish in 1667, petitioned the General Assembly in 1698 to be received into communion, but was deposed by the Commission of Assembly for inefficiency and negligence, after a ministry of thirty-two years.

It is maintained by one of his successors that he was treated very badly. "He was deposed very unjustly, as it is said Barron had conformed; but they sought after and pretended other causes for setting him aside. It will perhaps hardly be believed nowadays, that bodily infirmity and affliction from the hand of Providence

a. Fasti Vol. VII p. 313.

b. Brand. A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc. p. 141

were his greatest crimes." The brethren of the Presbytery, however, sympathised with him, and on 28th March 1705, each of them^a agreed to give £6 Scots yearly to supply his necessity.

His successor was William Umphray, son of Theodore Umphray, minister of Nesting. He was educated at the University of St Andrews, and took the degree of M.A; on 28th July 1678. He was inducted to the parish of Walls in 1695, and was called to this parish in September 1700, and admitted to it in the following month.^b He died in December of the same year, aged about 42.

Walls, Sandness, Papa Stour and Foula. Walls lies on the Mainland to the west. There are four churches in the parish, one in Walls, another in Sandness, the third in the Island of Papa Stour, and the fourth in Foula.^c

William Umphray M.A; was "intruded" into this parish" and ordained in 1695 by Kay of Dunrossness, Binning of Tingwall, Leigh of Bressay, Barron of Sandsting, and Umphray of Nesting." In 1698 he petitioned the General Assembly to be received into Presbyterian communion. His petition was granted, and in October 1700 he was translated to Sandsting.^d

This intrusion is but another proof that the Revolution of 1688, and the subsequent change of polity in the Church in Scotland, did not make itself felt in Shetland for a decade at least.

a. Fasti Vol. VII. p. 314-315.

b. Fasti. Vol. VII. p. 315.

c. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc p. 142.

d. Fasti. Vol. VII. p. 317.

It was in 1698 that the first indications appear of a movement amongst the ministers in Shetland to recognize the authority of the Church of Scotland, as established after the Revolution by Act of Parliament. In that year six of the ministers in Shetland petitioned the General Assembly to be admitted to Presbyterian communion. These were Hugh Leigh, minister of Bressay; James Kay, minister of Dunrossness and Fair Isle; William Binning, minister of Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale; Theodore Umphray, minister of Nesting and Lunnasting; Cornelius Barron, minister of Sandsting and Aithsting; and William Umphray, minister of Walls, Sandness, Papa Stour, and Foula.

Of these, two were refused admission, viz:- Theodore Umphray who escaped deposition by resigning, and Cornelius Barron who was deposed. The remaining four ministers were received into communion.

In 1700 the General Assembly, as we have seen, sent up a Commission to complete the work of putting the Church on a basis in Shetland, in accordance with the change over that had taken place in the Church of Scotland to a Presbyterian form of government. This Commission visited the various parishes in Shetland, and conferred with the Presbytery and Kirk Sessions, and thereafter reported to the Assembly of 1701, what it had done, and made certain recommendations. The report was unanimously approved and adopted.

It is most unfortunate that the report has disappeared, for had it been preserved it would not only have furnished a full account of what the Commission did and recommended, but would have

thrown much light on the parishes themselves, and on church life in general in Shetland.

Another regrettable fact is that all the Presbytery and Kirk-Session records of the Church in Shetland for this period have disappeared, and consequently there are no local accounts of what took place at the meetings of the Commission with the Presbytery and Kirk-Sessions. In this connection, however, there is one exception, for Sir Francis Grant, when on a visit to Shetland some years ago made an extract from the Kirk-Session minute book of Tingwall relating to the meeting of the Commission with the Tingwall Kirk-Session. This minute, however, makes no reference to the proposed separation of Lerwick from the Tingwall parish, and the minute book itself is no longer available. The minute is as follows:- "Visit of Commission of General Assembly consisting of Mr James Hart minister at Ratho, moderator, Mr James Graham minister at Holm, Orkney, Mr John Sandilands minister at Dolphington, Clerk to the Commission, Mr Alexander Lauder minister at Mordington, Mr Patrick Guthrie minister at Ladie Kirk in Sanday, Mr William Schaw minister at Westray, Mr James Kay minister at Dunrossness, Mr Hugh Leigh minister at Bressay, Mr John Cattanach minister at Unst, and Mr William Binning minister at Tingwall. Mr John Brand minister at Borrowstouness, was absent because of the indisposition of his body. The minister was removed, and the elders were interrogated as to his life and conversation. The heritors present were George Cheyne of Esselmont, Patrick Leslie of Ustaness, James Mitchell of Girlstay, William Dick of Fracafield, Mr John Gauden of Swinister, and several others, heads

of families. The minister stated that he had not celebrated the sacrament of the Lord's Supper since his reception to the government because of the ruinous condition of the kirks, and his disappointment with reference to the elements, but that now he had gotten home wine for that end and purpose."

The minute is dated 31st May 1700.

But though the information obtainable from every source, as to the work of the Commission in Shetland is somewhat meagre, there can be no doubt whatever that the re-organisation of the Church in Shetland on Presbyterian lines as it is to-day, was the outcome of the Commission's visit, and that from the time the Commission finished its visitation of Shetland, every minister who held office there had been admitted into Presbyterian Communion, and that the ~~Presbyterian~~ doctrine and polity of the Church of Scotland had been accepted by the Church in Shetland.

One result of the Commission's visit was the disjunction of Lerwick from the parish of Tingwall, and its erection into a separate charge.

Another result was the suspension of Theodore Umphray from his ministerial office on a charge of immorality, after he had already been refused admission into Presbyterian communion by the General Assembly in 1698 on the ground that he had taken the Test.

The Commission also received John Catanach minister of Unst, and Alexander Dunbar minister of Delting, into Presbyterian communion.

The parish of Northmavine and Ollaberry was vacant at the

time of the Commission's visit, and had been so for some ten years, but was shortly after filled by a licentiate from Scotland, no doubt at the instance of the Commission.

In the case of Fetlar it is stated that Sir John Carnegie was "continued" in 1698, but it appears that after being preacher in Lerwick in 1699, he became a factor on his father's estate, and ultimately succeeded him.^a It is probable that Fetlar was joined to Mid Yell and South Yell, when he became preacher in Lerwick, for Fetlar was united to Mid Yell and South Yell before 1700.^b

Brand in his account of his visit to Shetland gives the reader some of his impressions of the inhabitants of these Islands, and his opinion of the state of religion there.

He describes the people as "generally discreet and civil, and not so clownish and rustic as ~~might~~^{would} be expected."^c

He also declares that they have always been in repute for hospitality,^d which is something to be wondered at, considering the treatment these Islanders had received.

He says, "in the matters of God and religion they are said to be very ignorant by those who know them better than we," and concludes that this may be caused by lack of schools in their midst.^e

Nevertheless he found that during his stay in Shetland, the

a. Fasti. Vol. VII. p. 296.

b. " " " p. 301.

c. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc. p. 100.

d. " " " " " " " " p. 101.

e. " " " " " " " " p. 102.

majority of the people frequented the dispensing of the Gospel ordinances, and appeared to listen with some measure of attention and reverence, and he bears witness to their eagerness to hear the sermons at the week-day services held by the Commission, and says that they were thronged, and is of opinion that if things were put into a better state there might be a harvest through^a grace.

In the General Assembly's address to the King on behalf of Lerwick, immorality and the profaning of the Sabbath are sins which are singled out as flourishing there, and for these the lack of Gospel ordinances and Church discipline is held^b responsible.

It is not surprising, however, that the standard of religion and morals was not a very high one, when we take into consideration the remoteness of the Islands from the Mainland, the oppression and tyranny of the landowners, the fewness of the ministers, and the long vacancies that occurred in some of the parishes, for all these things combined, were a formidable obstacle to the growth of christian character, and the development of morality.

Yet in spite of all these hindrances, there is to be found evidence, both in the petitions and letters from Lerwick to the General Assembly, and in the observations of Brand, that at the beginning of the eighteenth century there was in the hearts of the people of Shetland a love for the Church and its

a. Brand: A Brief Description of Orkney, Zetland etc. p.102-3.

b. Appendix A.

ordinances, and a strong desire to hear the Gospel preached more frequently, however much they failed to live up to its teaching.

At the conclusion of this survey of the Church in Shetland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the writer would draw attention to certain facts which have emerged from the study of this period of history.

In the first place it is very evident that the Church in Shetland was left very much to its own devices, much more so even than Orkney. The bishops seldom visited it, and it is doubtful if the Archdeacon of Shetland exercised much control over the remaining clergy in the Islands, nor later, after the Reformation had taken place, did the General Assembly seem to be able to devise any way of properly supervising the work in Shetland, and was at a loss how to keep in touch with the Presbytery, and control its actions, for even when the Presbytery was brought directly under its care, and was urged to send commissioners regularly to the Assembly, there is no record in the minutes of the Assembly, even after the Revolution, of any commissioner being sent until 1700, when the name of Mr James Kay, minister at Dunrossness, appears as such.

This is not to be wondered at owing to the great distance of the Islands from Scotland, and the difficulty of getting there in those days, and also the fact that the interests of a Church so far removed from the centre of things would be easily overlooked and forgotten.

In the second place it may be safely said that during

this period, the ministers in Shetland, unlike many of their brethern in Scotland, did not resist the changes in Church government that took place from time to time, and even at the Restoration not a single minister gave up his parish for the sake of conscience. Indeed it is not till 1843 that we see the ministers of Shetland taking sides, and giving up their livings for the sake of the cause they had championed. They seem to have adopted the policy of acquiescing in any change that was made, while passively resisting it as long as possible, as we see in the case of the Revolution of 1688, where the ministers of Shetland, safe from interference for a time through their distance from Scotland, clung to Episcopacy for another ten years, but in the end submitted to the inevitable.

In the third place the people themselves seemed quite content to accept the changes in government and Church as they came, and so there were no uprisings, and consequently no persecutions, such as were witnessed in Scotland during this period. Any differences with State or Church were of a personal nature, as for instance, when they complained of the tyranny of Robert and Patrick Stewart, Bruce of Cultemalindie and their satellites, and resisted it to the best of their ability, or threatened with violence individual ministers who rebuked their evil ways.

Note.

In an article by Dr W.J.Couper on "The Moravian Brethren in Scotland," it is related that in 1739 two Moravians, Ulric Bahr and Henry Allmess were sent to Scotland to see if they could discover if anything were known of the descendants of a colony of Moravian Waldenses, who were said to have settled in Lerwick during the persecutions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in order to escape trouble, and to maintain their liberty of conscience. These two delegates sailed from Leith to Lerwick in June 1739. On their arrival there they made inquiries, but all they could learn was that there was a tradition that such a settlement had been made at Lerwick, but could discover no descendants of these Moravians, or find out any particulars of the settlement itself. All trace of it had disappeared.^a

Nothing is known of this tradition in Shetland to-day, nor has the writer of this thesis come upon any reference to it in the course of his research, and it seems hard to believe that a settlement of people with the missionary zeal of the Moravians should have left no trace of their work in the Islands, even though they themselves had disappeared.

a. Dr W.J.Couper: Moravian Brethren in Scotland. Records of the Scottish Church History Society Vol.V. Part 1.p.53. 1933.

Records in the Library of the Church of Scotland
Edinburgh,

Relating to the Church in Shetland 1700-1702.

Appendix A.

The Parish of Lerwick.

Call given by Lerwick to Mr John Sandilands, 19th Nov. 1700.

"We under subscribers, heritors, feuers, elders and other inhabitants within the bounds of Lerwick in Zetland considering our soules' want of Gospell ordinances frequentlie administered amongst us by reason of our great distance from Tingwall our Parish Church, and having some gracious assurance not only of a disjunction of this our toun of Lerwick from Tingwall, as also of a certaine some of money from His Majestie which with what we now ourselves can give, will make up a competent stipend to a minister to live amongst us, Therefore having heard and been greatly satisfied with the parts and abilities, conversation and doctrine of you Mr John Sandilands present minister at Dolphington in the Presbyterie of Biggar in Mid Lothian, who was one of the Reverend Brethren of the Commission of the late General Assemblie appointed for visiting this Presbyterie, doe most sincerelie call you to be our minister, hereby promising to use all lawful endeavour to procure before the Assemblie an act of transportabilitie to you, and lykewayes are hopeful of the Venerable Assemblie's concurrence for your transportation to us, and through the Lord's assistance we hereby promise all suitable obedience, reverence and encouragement.

Subscribed with our hands at Lerwick the 19th of Nov. 1700."

Here follow signatures.

"The above written call conformed to the appointment of the
Presbyterie of Zetland was moderated by me

J.W.Binning"

Call sustained by the Presbytery of Zetland.

"At Lerwick, 19th of Nov. 1700.

The said day the within written call being presented to the
Presbyterie of Zetland and read and considered, they found the
same orderlie, proceeded in approval of their choice, and with
them earnestlie entreate the within designed minister to come
and labour with them in the work of God.

Signed in name and at the appointment of the Presbyterie
by J.W.Binning, Moderator of Presbyterie of Zetland.

Reasons for Transportation of Mr John Sandilands from Dolphington
to Lerwick, Zetland.

"Although the ministers of the Gospel for order and convenience have settled in particular congregations and are appointed their soall flocks over which they are made overseers, yet we humbly conceive they are members of the Catholic Church, and may be sent by the Judicatures of the Church to such corners of the Lord's vineyard to labour in where they may be most useful, and this being agreeable to the arts and laudable practice of this National Church, the toun of Lerwick are encouraged to lay the following considerations before the Reverend Judicatories of the Church before whom this affair shall come.

(1) The General Assemblie have made many acts for the right planting of the North, and though the toun of Lerwick be something

remote, yet they are a part of this National Church, and the late venerable Assemblie have owned them as such, and have left upon record an instance of their great care of the most remote corner of the Church, in their sending some Reverend and worthie brethren to visit the Islands of Zetland which may begin such a post of service to the Church of God that the Generations to come, we hope, shall have cause to bless them for.

(2) The toun of Lerwick is of itself a considerable post, for within these forty years or thereby there was but about 4 families therein, and now there is about seven hundred inhabitants in that toun besides many others about the same who wait on the dispensation of ~~Ch~~ospel ordinances in the Church of Lerwick, and by reason of the great resort to Bressay Sound, where there will be sometimes about 800 saills of ships at once in their coming and going to the fishing, and lykeways of many merchant ships in their coming and going to the Indies and other places. That toun is increasing both in buildings and inhabitants, so that there is a vast disproportion betwixt the (parish) called from and to, Lerwick being the chief post in the countrie of Zetland and the Presbyterie's seat.

(3) The difficulty of baptisms at Tingwall (vide Petition to, King)

(4) Want of minister stumbling block to strangers (vide Petition to King).

(5) The Rev. Mr John Sandilands is one who by his prudent carriage and good gift of preaching, and wise management of affairs when in Zetland did much engage the hearts not only of the people of Lerwick, but also other gentlemen and ministers of that countrie

so that even before he left them they let something fall of their designs to give him a call, and many of the reverend ministers presently in Zetland not having had occasion to be acquainted with the forms and procedures of the Judicatories of the Church here: Mr Sandilands who is so much experienced that way will be undoubtedly very useful to his brethren of the Presbyterie of Zetland, and by reason of his general acquaintance in the South, he living in Lerwick the watch tower in Zetland, will be a fitt person to keep up a correspondence in writing with every occasion that goes from Lerwick to the South Country.

(6) And seeing the People of Lerwick and the Presbyterie of Zetland after hearing of Mr Sandilands and converse with him, look upon him as a very fitt person for the post he is called to, and have given him a very harmonious, loyall and orderly call, and are most willing to do all that lies in their power for sutable encouragement to him and give what security the law can require thereanent

It is humbly and earnestly intreated that the Judicatories before whom this affair shall happen to come may speedily grant the transportation, and that the Rev. Mr John Sandilands will for His Majesty's sake and our souls readily and cheerfully comply with our call, and speedily come over and help us, many of us being lyke to perish for want of one to dispense Gospel ordinances for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace."

Petition for the Disjunction of the Town of Lerwick from Tingwall.

" Wee Underscribers, Heretors, Elders and Inhabitants within the bounds of Lerwick having upon our address and the address of Mr William Binning, minister at Tingwall to the Reverend Commission of the late General Assemblie and Presbyterie of Zetland, obtained a perambulation of the parish of Tingwall, unto which the said toune is annexed, and having obtained their report thereanent, and being still mor and mor sensible how much it concerns the good of our immortal soules to have the said toune Lerwick disjoyned from Tingwall and erected into a congregation by ytsel, that we may have access to call a minister of our own to tak care and oversight of our soulls in the Lord, and though we be not able among our selves to give a ffull stipend to a minister according to the Act of Parliament, yet we entertain no small hopes that the King's Majesty will grant us Royal holp herein upon the Church's representation and recommendation of our caise and circumstances unto him. Witt ye therfor us and we doe by these presents, nominate, commissionate and appoynt Baylie Andrew Bruce, put magistrate in our said toune of Lerwick, Mr Samuel Urquhart merchant yr, and William Henderson of Garder, heritors and elders yr, or any one of them in their own name and in our name to address, petition and supplicatt the honourable Lords of the Commission of Parliament for Plantation of Kirks, seriouslie to consider the said report of the Perambulatory forsaid, and to grant the disjunction of the toun of Lerwick from Tingwall in all tyme coming, and to doe all and sundrie yeranent for rendering the same effectual, as if we now ourselves wer personallie present, and we doe hereby promise to hold firm and stable whatever our said Commissioners or aither of them

shall think fit to doe in the premises. In testimony
thereof we have subscriybed these presents at Lerwick, the
fyfteenth day of June one thousand and seven hundred years"

Signatures follow.

The Petition given hereunder followed on the Commission's visit to Shetland in 1700, and was addressed to the General Assembly on 3rd March 1701. The Committee for Bills moved that it should be granted. The facts are embodied in the address to the King.

"To the Reverend the Moderator and Remanent members of the General Assembly of the National Church of Scotland.

The Petition of Mr Samuel Urquhart, Lerwick, as Commissioner therefrom for himself and in the name of the said town, humbly sheweth That about fortie years agoe the toun of Lerwick consisted of but about four families, the houses thereof being built upon a commontie; the same lying near the harbour of Bressa Sound, where many ships did resort, the said toun began to increase both in buildings and inhabitants. And there are at present about seven hundred inhabitants belonging to the said toun, Besides a multitude of strangers, for sometimes there will be about 800 sail of ships lying beside it, belonging to the Dutch and Hamburgers in the coming and going to the fishing, and lykeways many merchant ships are driven frequently in there with contrary winds in the voyages to and from the Indies and other places. And yet the said toun is annexed to the parish kirk of Tingwall, which is six miles distant from them, and the way very difficult to pass in the summer, but utterly impassable for most part of the winter, so that when the inhabitants of Lerwick are necessitate to go to Tingwall to get baptism to the children they take with them the children's dead cloaths, and little children have certainly died by the way, which was the cause that under the late Prelacy

the Bishop did ordain the Deacon to preach and baptise at Lerwick and the inhabitants built a church which stands to this day, and they did and are still willing to contribute according to their ability for helping to maintain a minister, and when the Commission of the late General Assembly came to Lerwick, promises were laid before them, who having sent some to perambulate the parish of Tingwall, found it eighteen miles long and nine miles broad, and about 2000 persons therein, and found the way impassable as is above exprest. And therefore granted a recommendation for a new erection at Lerwick, and for something from the King's Majestie to help to make up a stipend, according to which a process is commenced, and we having good grounds to hope our desire will be granted, we have given a very harmonious call to the Reverend Mr John Sandilands to be our minister, backed with strong reasons for his transportation, which are herewith produced. But our decreit of Disjunction and new erection, nor a competent stipend, not being as yet obtained, we forbear to insist for a transportation until we are in a better case to give our minister suitable encouragement, and we protest that no advantage be taken of our not insisting at this time, but so soon as the Decreit and stipend shall be (granted) we may have leave to prosecute the transportation.

May it therefore please this venerable Assembly not only to recommend our case effectively to the Commission of Parliament for a new erection, but also to His Majesty for something to help to make up a stipend according to the recommendation of your Brethren who were in Zetland, and lykeways to referr the said

process of transportation to the Commission to be appointed by you, to be similarly determined, and to appoint the Agent for the Kirk to prosecute the same in the usual manner, whether any from us be present or not, and present any commission from us seeing some of us cannot attend in person that affair, and in the meantime to appoint the Presbyterie of Zetland to supply us with Gospel ordinances as frequently as they can, that we may not be in a worse state now than under Prelacy, and your Petitioners shall ever pray.

Samuel Urquhart.

Records of Commission of General Assembly 1701-2. Pages 42-45.

"The Committee nominate for the affairs of Zetland having brought in the draught of ane address to His Majestie in favours of Toun of Lerwick in Zetland, the same was read in presence of the Commission, and being unanimously agreed to, is hereby appointed to be subscribed by their Moderator, and to be delivered to His Majestie's Secretaries of State for the Kingdom of Scotland, by Mr George Meldrum, Mr William Crichton, Mr David Blair, Mr James Wark, to be presented to His Majestie. The tenor of the address follows,

To the King's Most Excellent Majestie, the humble address of the Ministers and Ruling Elders, Commissioners appointed by the late General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

Sheweth that the General Assembly held in the year 1700 having sent some of their number with a commission to visit and regulate the affairs of the Church in the Isles of Zetland, the inhabitants of the town of Lerwick took occasion to represent to the members of that Commission met in conjunction with the Presbytery of the bounds That within these fourty years or thereby, the inhabitants of that town were but very few, not exceeding four families, But some years after they began to increase, The commodiousness of the harbour of Bressay Sound inviting thereto, so that there will now be about seven hundred inhabitants therein, Betwixt whom and Tingwall, their old parish kirk, the distance being great and the way unpassable in the winter season, and the said Commission and Presbytery having sent some to perambulate the Parish of Tingwall,

they found a new **Erection** necessary, And that because of the greatness of the charge of the Minister of Tingwall, which was eighteen myles long and nine myles broad, and in those bounds about 2000 people, Besides the inhabitants of Lerwick, And the way betwixt the church of Tingwall and the Town of Lerwick most difficult to travel even in the summertime, but almost impassable in the winter season, And sometimes when they were obliged to carry their children to Tingwall for, Baptism such is the badness and hazard of the way, the same being deep and marish, and sometimes watters therein, That they take with them the children's dead cloaths, and severall children have actually died by the way, which moved the Late Bishop of Orkney to constitute a Deacon to preach and baptize att Lerwick. And besides there will be sometimes about 7 or 8 hundred Holland Busses at once lying before the said town in Bressay-Sound, As also many merchant ships from Holland and other places are frequently driven ~~in~~ thither in their coming and going from and to the Indies, and other places, many of which especially of those who belong to the Busses, and for many years having frequented that place, doe understand our language and attend Divine worship in the church of Lerwick. And therefor the said Commission met in conjunction with the Presbytery of Zetland did recommend to the Commission of Parliament for Planting of Kirks etc, To disjoin Lerwick from the Paroch of Tingwall, and erect the Toun of Lerwick by itself. And a process being commenced and carried on in the usual manner The same was granted by the Lords and others to the said Commission of Parliament, And because there was not free teinds in the Paroch of

Lerwick, the saids Lords and others did upon the ninth day of July last humbly recommend to your Majestie to grant the some of Five Hundred marks Scots yearly out off the first and readjust of the rents of the Bishoprick of Orknay and Zetland now fallen in your Majestie's hands through the abolishing of prelacie, which with the sum of 300 marks to be collected by the inhabitants will make in all the sum of 800 marks of yearly stipend to the ministers of the new erected paroch of Lerwick, And the inhabitants of Lerwick have such confidence and bounty, That they have already given a call to one to be their minister, But the Judicatories of the Church cannot transport him until a competent stipend be settled for him according to the said recommendation, And seeing this is a matter which very much concerns the glory of God and good of immortal souls, And that the want of a fixed minister in that town and Paroch is not only prejudiciall to the said town and paroch in particular and the whole country in general, Lerwick being now the chief town thereof, But also it opens the mouths of strangers who resort thither, And the poor inhabitants are as sheep without a shepherd, And for want of Gospell ordinances and of church discipline, the Sabbath is profanned and immorality of all sorts abounds to the great dishonour of the Christian Reformed Religion, and reproach of the government both of state and church in this land. And having assurance by most convincing experiences of your Majestie's care and zeal to maintain and encourage the ministers of the Gospell we doe therefore in all humility Beseech your Majestie that you will please to adde this to many other marks of your Royal munificence to this Church, according to a

signature transmitted herewith to your Majestie's Secretaries for that effect, For without it the people of that place cannot enjoy the Blessing of having Gospell Ordinances administrate to them, and the doing thereof will be a lasting instance of your Majestie's Royall care of and bounty to this Church, and that even to the remotest parts of your Majestie's Dominions.

That your Majestie's reign may be long and happy

That you may be guided and directed of God in the great and weighty affairs of your Government

And that your undertakings and Councils may be still successful for preserving and defending the Reformed religion at home and abroad are the earnest and fervent prayers of, May it please your Majestie, your Majestie's most faithful, most obedient, and most humble subjects the Ministers and elders, Commissioners of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Signed in our name and at our appointment by

J.W.M.

Call from Lerwick to Rev. John Sandilands

Before the Presbytery of Biggar.

"At Biggar the 12th of Feb 1702.

The which day ane call from the Paroch of Lerwick to the Rev. Mr John Sandilands minister of Dolphington to be their minister, with reasons thereof presented to the Presbyterie by our Moderator. The Presbyterie taking into consideration the Acts of the General Assembly with relation to. such calls did appoint their officer to repair to the Paroch of Dolphington the next Sabbath day and summond the paroch to compear before the Presbyterie the twentieth and sixth day of February to answer the reasons of the Paroch of Lerwick for transporting their minister to there, and Mr John Sandilands being present the call and reasons of Lerwick were delivered to him, and he appointed to communicate the same to the Paroch of Dolphington and cited apud acta to compear before the Presbyterie on the twenty-sixth of this instant being their next meeting."

Presbytery of Biggar further considers call from Lerwick.

"At Biggar 26th Feb 1702.

Anent the affair of Lerwick the Presbyterie having called their officer, and this officer having delivered the summons duly execute and endorsed, the Presbytery did appoint their officer to call at the church door if there were any from the Paroch of Lerwick to insist in that affair, whereupon compeared Benjamine Allane writer in Edinburgh, producing a commission from John Blair Kirk Agent, empowering him to prosecute the affair of Lerwick before the Presbyterie of Biggar, which was read and sustained. As also the Minister and Paroch of Dolphington being called, compeared, Mr John Sandilands, the Laird of Dolphington, John Archibald and William Tweddy and William Leishman, elders, with several others from the paroch of Dolphington. And the Laird of Dolphington having given in a paper containing the answers of the Paroch of Dolphington being all read, Mr Sandilands was enquired at what he had to say to the Presbytery in this affair, he informed that he adhered to the answers of the paroch, and gave in a paper containing his own answers to the reasons of Lerwick which he also read, after which all parties being fully heard Iline inde by word of mouth, were removed. The Presbytery having taken the whole affair into their serious consideration, and finding the reasons and answers of both sides to be of great weight and consequence, and being greatly diffculted in the affair, they did think it fit to put it to the vote(here indecipherable) determined or referr this affair to the General Assemblie. And it being put to the vote carried Referr lykas the Presbyterie doeth refer the whole affair to the next General Assemblie to meet at Edinburgh the sixth day

of March 1702, if it shall be found sitting on or after the tenth day of the said month, And if not to the next ensuing Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, upon which all **parties** being called in the same was read in their hearing, and all parties were cited apud acta by the Moderator to compear before the Assembly the tenth day of March with continuation of days.

Thereupon Mr John Sandilands protested and appealed to the next Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale and tooke instruments on the Clerk's hand for the following reasons

1. In regard that there is not ten free days betwixt the forsaid reference, and the sitting down of the next General Assembly.
2. Because the reverend Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale is the next immediate superior Judicatorie, and also are far better acquaint with Mr Sandilands his qualifications and circumstances than any General Assembly possibly can be.

And likewise the Laird of Dolphington protested in his own name and in the name of the paroch and thereupon took instruments

Extracted out of the records of the Presbytery of Biggar
by me, Jo Taitt, Cl Presby."

Answers of the Parish of Dolphington to the reasons given by Lerwick for calling the Rev. John Sandilands.

"Answer by the Paroch of Dolphington to the call and reasons of transportation made by the Paroch of Lerwick in Zetland to Mr John Sandilands minister of the Paroch of Dolphington.

Although such a process of transportation be both vexatious and irritating to us and to our minister, yet waiving all passionate

reflections and desiring to contend by strength of reason and with Gospel meekness, as well becoming an affair of this nature and that before our reverend and right reverend judges, let us humbly therefore demonstrate to your reasons, 1st our animadversions upon the call itself, 2ndly our answers to the reasons of Lerwick their call. As to the first of these This call to Lerwick is unwarrantably so termed, nor can it amount to the least point of the legality of an orderly call to our minister, it being a non habente potestatem. For at time when making of this pretended call Lerwick was not disjoined from Tingwall, no not for a 12 months or thereabouts after, for which we refer to their act of disjunction obtained before the Commission for Plantation of Kirks. But what need we refer further then to the (illegality) of their own pretended call when all things necessarie, prerequisite and only preparatorie to a call were but upon the foil, so that this call is preposterous and disorderly and can have no effect. Moreover as Lerwick was at time stated in relation to Tingwall to call our minister was to invite him to intrusion upon another man's (parish) against all law, reason and religion.

2. This pretended call beside it's disorderly, it stands self condemned for want of that desirable harmonie which all calls, especially of such ane and difficult post do require. There being as itself doth grant seven hundred people in Lerwick, whereof there will be about fourtie heritors and twelve elders and deacons, and yet of all these but twentie subscribers. We hope the Reverend Judicatories will see how such a discouragement must needs be to

our minister.

3. As to the second point under consideration-the reasons of the debated call with the preface thereto- As to the preface, although we do not deny the lawfulness of the transportation of ministers from one congregation to another, yet we hope it is **but** in some cases, and as the deplorable state of this Church at the happy late revolution did necessarily **open** a door to many transportations, so we hope the great settlement that by the mercy of God is now **obtained** in the Church, will shut this door, and that the door of transportation is already made somewhat straiter, the former necessitie now not being under pretence either with effect to Northern or Southern bounds, and that **through** the numerous multitudes of well qualified and godly young levites, who because of the strength and vigour of their youth in conjunction with **their** other qualifications are unexceptionable even with respect to considerable charges and posts.

Although we grant the lawfulness of transportations in some cases, yet not in the case of inconsistencie with our National Assemblie's Acts, especially such Acts as have particular reference to the North, as that particular vacant parishes should first essay to plant themselves with a probationer, which Lerwick hath utterly neglected.

In the **straitest** case of transportation the Church never intended to offer violence to nature, or to dissolve the nearest bonds thereto, which this transportation granted, must needs at least in all moral probability do, for either our minister's

children must stay behind him, and so he and they must be civilly dead to one another, or else they must go with him, and it is death itself by reason of their infancie and tender bodily constitution. We do indeed confess that all who will live godly and especially the Lord's ministers ought to be mortified to their wives, children and all that is dear to them, otherwise they are not worthie of our Lord Jesus Christ. But this cannot obtain in a settled Church nor in the case of Lerwick, who may be served without such a violent stretch to nature, for we add to this our humble sentiments that this transportation shall be the way to cut short our dear minister his own days, and so instead of serving the greater good of the Church, it shall but rob the Church of what benefits he is capable to impart in his present circumstances either with relation to us or other accumulative offices he is honoured with.

As to the reasons of the call, an answer to the first reason: Lerwick claims all the benefits of the Act of Assemblie in favour of the North because there is no mention made of them in the list of the privileged posts that have benefited of the expedite way of calling from the South, and as to the Assemblie's care in sending a commission to Zetland in the year 1700, where our reverend minister was honoured to be a member, they ought in Lerwick to be more thankful to us for the loan of our minister, for his cheerful and willing undertaking than to seek him a second time to the jeopardy of his life, the life of his children, and the great grief of us his obedient loving people.

As to the second reason urged from the consideration of the post of Lerwick, its inhabitants and harbour carrying a

disproportion of weight above our paroch of Dolphington we do grant this sayes they should have a minister, but that they should have our minister is weak reasoning, for though indeed we cannot plead such a number of inhabitants, yet it is of verity that our church **lyes** upon one of the most frequented post roads of the Kingdom, and scarce is there a Lord's Day in all the year whereupon we want a considerable number of strangers frequenting our church, which calls for a minister of parts to us as well as to them in Lerwick.

And the third reason argued from their disjunction from Tingwall what says that of the matter, but that they are now and have not been till now capable to a call to any man or minister, and that therefore this call should fall, and they be exhorted to improve this disjunction by giving a call to such a person as shall consist more with mercy, gratitude, and the probability of obtaining and holding (the same).

As to their 4th reason that this want of minister stumbles strangers, Hollanders and Hamburgers, we humbly conceive that they have not fallen upon the way to remove this stumbling block, which is so great and offensive, as should have been endeavoured viz:- with more speed than by such a tedious process as this must needs be, the circumstances of our minister being duly weighed, for supposing this transportation should be yielded, which we are loath to think, and which we deprecate. His circumstances are such as could not allow Lerwick the possession of our minister to their satisfaction for two years to come, which delay might continue the offence to strangers, and give umbrage of a strange humour

in the people of Lerwick, nay a cruel humour to say they will have no other, but with danger of the loss of his life and small familie whilst they may be served nearer the door.

As to their 5th reason, pleading from our minister his fitness for their post upon the account of his prudent carriage, good gift of preaching, with management of affairs while he was in Zetland, together with his capacity to entertain correspondence with the South if he were settled at Lerwick etc; all these things being proper for himself to answer, we leave to him, only this we have to say we were convinced of our minister's qualifications before them, and that more than they are—at least seem to be, convinced of viz:— his piety and exemplarie use of life and conversation of which two qualifications they did not drop one convincing word in all their call, are reasons which became for satisfaction of their own conscience to be convinced of before they could depose, and whom therefore we last deposed from convictions of ten years comfortable experience of the same, and of all his other qualifications which we pray the Lord to increase and continue with him, and him with us, and pray also that the Lord of the Vineyard would determine the hearts and minds of his own servants our Right Reverend Judges to continue our faithful, lawful and loving pastor with us, and no less to give help to the Lord's people of Lerwick by the hand of him whom he will send.

Follows some few additional things represented by the forsaide paroch for continuing their minister with them and denying him to Lerwick as

It is well known how useful and serviceable our minister hath been to this church and in the Assemblies' Commissions and Committees;

how frequently he hath been in the North upon missions and commissions there since he was our minister, and that when others disobeyed, shifted, yea slighted and contemned appointments of that kind, he was always an obedient son of this Church, having been no less than 3 several times in the North, once in Zetland, and now to banish him from his own native land into a strange countrey, and deprive him of the comfortable communion and fellowship of all his dear friends, Brethren and acquaintances of all which he hath not a few, will be but a bad reward to him for all his good services, cheerful and ready obedience, and will be an ill recompence to us for our great loss and disadvantage we sustained through his frequent and long absence from us by the foresaid appointments, and also the same may prove no small discouragement to any other that shall happen to be sent upon Commission, when they find that the extent of their obedience shall be to transport them from their own flocks and other interests upon slender applications of some that may pretend to call them, which may not only discourage any to go on the Churches Commissions, but also to be less zealous in their work when called thereunto, and who knows what need there may be as yet of such a willing and obedient servant to the Church, as our minister is and has been; if either South or North stand in need of Committees and Commissions, as hitherto they have done, through setting of him in that place, must of necessity deprive the Church of any further service of him that way.

It should be considered that if our minister be transported to Lerwick he goeth from a certain to an uncertain maintenance,

whereby he and all his family may be soon ruined, for if the wars break out, and who cannot but see the unavoidableness thereof. In the present juncture that countrey is ruined in their trade and way of living which depends upon their fishing and correspondence which they have with Holland and Hamburg, and evident proof whereof was given in the late wars where they were not only harassed and plundered by privateers coming ashore upon their islands but even by reason of the decay of their trade that country was so impoverished that many of them are groaning under their misfortunes to this day, and how can they but in the time of war perish when their victuals must be provided to them from other countries, and all the seas be locked up round about them, and it must be supposed that a stipend to be uplifted by collection from the inhabitants of a paroch in such a case will be payed unpleasantly, especially considering this same is a new burden which formerly they have not been accustomed with.

Lastly. It would be considered how uneasie it cannot but be to plant our paroch of Dolphington with a minister in regard the legal stipend thereof is so very inconsiderable, for had not our minister been clerk to the Reverend and worthie Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale we are confident his loss in these late ill years had been very hard, but now by reason of that accumulative office is tolerably well provided for, and professes himself willing to live and die with us if it be God's will, but if he be taken from us we cannot expect to furnish the Synod with another well qualified clerk who may enjoy the said comfortable maintenance which our minister at the time doeth deservedly possess."

Rev. John Sandilands' reply to the reasons given for his
Transportation to Lerwick.

I do adhere to all that my dear and well beloved parishioners have said in answer to the reasons of the town of Lerwick, except that they have considered me far above measure in merit. I am heartily sorrie that the poor people of Lerwick should have so little considered their own interest and the interest of a whole country as to give the least intimation of a design to call such ane insignificant ane as I am, and am known to be by all that have any real knowledge of me, and who were I never so meet for that post, yet my circumstances remaining render this utterly impracticable. As for my own personal views, I think I may venture to say that if my heart deceives me not (there) is no single thing that hath any weight with me, might I but (be able) to serve the Lord Christ in any corner of the world, and though my days should be shortened in the rod (road) of duty I should reckon myself at no disadvantage, but I cannot (but) say, and I hope my Reverend judges will not think I say seriously amiss, that it goeth very near to my heart to expose my 5 poor motherless^{children}, with my own mother, ane poor old infirm woman, and seal these relations dependent upon me to that ruin and visible destruction that must unavoidably be the consequent of such a transportation, yet true if there were ane absolute necessity, or if that place could not otherwise be planted, and I a (suitable) person for that work, I think I would be very culpable to lay anything whatsoever in (the way of) the call, and with my being planted there, but may not that post be planted with another sort of ane instrument than I am, and whose

circumstances are not such as mine? Blest by the Lord are waiting many worthy and well qualified young men who have had greater helps to their education than ever I was capable to have, and cannot but be supposed to be far better qualified for that post than I possibly can be. Moreover I so disagree with a sea-faring life that it's a very terror unto me to think to undergo that pain and sickness I endured in my last voyage to that place, as all my Reverend Brethren who were with me can attest. I never set my foot in a boat, but I became so vehemently sick that hereby I was full incapable of anything whatsoever, either doing or speaking, and they that go to that countrey confess by their account to be always travelling from place to place in such fearful seas, the worse of which are not possibly to be found in the whole world. I shall not any longer take up the precious time of this Judicatorie. Let one only weigh my inability both of body and mind for that important post, whereby the interest of Christ cannot be but exposed; 2nd, My circumstances with respect to my family; 3rdly, what ground there is to suspect that the harmony may no longer live of this call; Lastly, the inconsiderableness and uncertainty of maintenance, there being neither manse, nor glebe, nor security of stipend.

Let every one of my impartial Judges put their own souls in my soul's place, then I shall not be afraid of having ever any cruel and insupportable burdens."

Copy of original Document in the Church of Scotland
Library, Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh.

"Edinburgh, 11th March 1702.

The Committee for Bills heard the reference, parties were called, and there compeared John Blair, Agent for the Kirk, pursuer, Mr John Sandilands etc, the opinion was that the matter was competent to go before the Assembly, and the protest fell to the ground."

Records of Commission of General Assembly 1702.

Page 100.

"Edinburgh 17th March 1702.

There being presented to this Commission a reference by the Presbytery of Biggar to the late General Assembly concerning the transportation of Mr J. Sandilands from the paroch of Dolphington to Lerwick in Zetland, with the said process of Transportation itself, which was transmitted to the said Assembly by their Committee for Bills, and the Commission considering they are empowered by the said Assembly to cognosce and determine in all such matters parties were called and compeared John Blair Agent for the Church pursuer of the said call, compeared also the said Mr John Sandilands himself, and Dr Andrew Broun of Dolphington, and then after reading etc appointed a committee to confer with Mr Sandilands and also with **Mr** James Buchan concerning the case of Shetland, thereafter to bring in an overture anent the said affair."

page 106. Decision of Committee.

"Edinburgh 18th March 1702.

They are of opinion that he should be sent in mission to that countrey to supply the Kirk of Lerwick and other vacancies for three months, and longer if he can, that in the meantime the stipend of Lerwick may be better secured, and pains taken thereanent, and that he may have occasion to converse with the people and inquire into the affairs of the Church in that country and report to the Commission; his own church to be supplied by

Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale and his office of clerk to the Synod to be reserved for him until his return; that he should receive 300 merks out of the public money gifted by the King to defray the charges of that voyage, and that without prejudice to what may be due by law for supplying that vacancie, and it was the Committee's opinion that he should go thither as soon as may be; and lastly, that an encouraging letter should be written and sent to the people of Lerwick, showing the Commission's concern for them."

Letter from Andrew Bruce to the Moderator of the
Commission of the General Assembly.

" Lerwick 7th May 1702.

Verrie Reverend Sir,

We received yours daited the 10th of March last, whereby we do humbly acknowledge ourselves singularly obliged to yourself with the rest of the Reverend Brethren of the honourable Assembly for taking so much care to settle a Gospel minister amongst us, being a poor people almost starved for want of Gospel ordinances, wishing earnestly that our desires that way may succeed for the glory of God ~~and~~ advancing of our souls' salvation, praying heartily for a further advancement of the Gospel as it is now settled in the Church, and although we have met with every opposition from others in this our good designe, yet now we have moe matter of rejoicing that our God hath made you His servant so favourably affected towards us, and moreover in appointing Mr John Sandilands your reverend Brother upon ~~our~~ hearty desire, also in obtaining the King's gift in our favour, without which we were not able to call a minister, and as for his security on our part (suppose weak and mean) we shall swear ourselves so far and take every pains that the Reverend Mr Sandilands shall meet with such encouragement as he expects as to our part of his stipend which is 300 merks Scotts, promised by us, which we inserted in the body of our address to the Venerable Commission, which we gave and now again rencw, and the continuance of your favour we still intreat and expect, for without that we

cannot stand, and if we had wanted the same we could never have attained to get it done, for which we hope your God and Master and ours will reward you.

What expense we have been at does not discourage us, and if we were able to bestow ten times more for such a work we would (by God's grace) do it, and wish the Lord may put us and ever keep us in a readiness for the receiving of His Gospel, and to show such kindness to His ambassadors as formerly. We cannot but mind the Reverend Mr James Barham his care and kindness towards us both absent and present, who has justified himself a servant sent of Jesus Christ, since he came to this **cpuntrey**. We shall not presume to be more tedious at present. We wish the works of the Lord to prosper in your hands that thereby we and others may have still more and more matter of rejoicing, and commit you with all reverence therein to the protection of Almighty God, and we subsign ourselves,

Verrie Reverend Sir,

Your humble and obliged servant

in the Lord,

Andr Bruce, Bailey,

and in the name of the rest of the inhabitants.

For the Very Reverend Mr David Williamson,

Moderator to the Commission of the General Assembly."

Page 118.

Edinburgh, 13th May 1702.

Mr John Sandilands having represented that since the last meeting of the Commission in March he had not had ane convenient opportunity of going to Zetland, though he had waited for a month for that effect, and now by the breaking out of the wars could not expect one, the Commission of the General Assemblie therefore excuse him from going thither till further order."

Records in the Library of the Church of Scotland,
Edinburgh,

Relating to the Church in Shetland 1700 -1702.

Appendix B. Theodore Umphray.

" At Lerwick September the twentie seventh(1700) the said day execution of summonses being brought in against Jannot Mowatt and Vessica Hewatt...,being lawfully summoned and personally apprehendit,and report being read that Margaret Sinclair, sometyme residenter in Yell and now gone of the countrey to Scotland about ane yeir ago,the persons summoned being now compeired,and Mr Theodore Umphray being called,lykways compeired, and he the said Mr Theodore being interrogat if he had anything to object against aither of these two persons why they might not be admitted as witnesses against him in the matter,informed the answer that as to Jannot Mowatt he had nothing to object ,but as for Vessica Hewatt he protested that she might not be admitted as ane witness against him because it was generally known that the said Vessica was ane proven thief,as could be manifest by the Spalzie Court,and he said the woman there present could not deny it,and the said Vessica answering nothing to the contrarie and the veritie of Mr Theodore's alledgiance being testaffied to the Presbyterie by the Spalzie and elders of the said town,the objection was sustained as relevant.

Jannot Mowatt above designed being admitted,called and formalie deponed anent her information ledd against Mr Theodore Umphray,deponed negativelie,and added that she neither saw nor knew any scandellous converse betwixt the said Mr Theodore

and Agnas Magnus-daughter bot only by common report so help her God.

This is all that was done in this affair before the Presbyterie of Zetland, as is by the command of the said Presbyterie, attested by

Wm Binning, Mod. Presby."

Resignation of Theodore Umphray 6th March 1701.

" I, Mr Theodore, Minister at Nesting in Zetland being most sensible that I am a very old man towards seventie years of age, and my body turned very valetudinary and weak whereby I am rendered unable to discharge the weightie duties of the ministrie, especially in those four parishes to which I have had relation these 45 years, and also being sensible that by reason of a process led against me in that countrey, and upon which I was suspended by the late Commission at Zetland, and that whatever I am able to say in my own defence, I judge I cannot be so usefull in the ministrie in that countrey as is requisite and being unwilling to stand in the way of the planting or success of the Gospell in that place, therefore and for the reasons foresaid I doe by these presents willinglie and freelie demitt any pastoral relation I ever had or can pretend to have to the forsaid united parishes of Nesting Lunnasting Whales and Skerries, and in testimonial of my sincerity in the premisses I have subscribed these presents at my hand at Edinburgh the fifth day of March one thousand seven hundred and one years before these witnesses, Mr Thomas Blackwell minister of the Gospell at Aberdeen, and Mr John Sandilands minister at

Dolphington and wrytter hereof.

Theodore Umphray

Thomas Blackwell witness.

J. Sandilands witness. "

Records of Commission of General Assembly p.6.

11th March 1701. Session 1.

"The Commission taking to their consideration that Mr Theodore Umphray having upon the sixth March current given in to the late General Assembly a demission of his ministry at the united parishes of Nesting, Lunnasting, Whales and the Skerries in Zetland, the General Assembly did nominate Mr Patrick Cumming, Mr Thomas Linning, Mr James Ramsay Senior and Mr James Grahame to confer with him, and consider of some way for his releiff, but that Committee not being ready to make their report before the rising of the said Assembly, they did yesterday refer that affair to this Commission. Therefore the Commission appoints the said Committee to meet this night and consider the said affair, and report their opinion thereanent to the Commission to-morrow."

12th March 1701. Session 3.

"The Commission appointed by the last General Assembly taking to their consideration the reference made to them concerning Mr Theodore Umphray, late minister at Nesting in Zetland, These nominate to meet and think upon a way for his maintenance, reported that it was their opinion that the Lords Commissioners of his Majesties Treasury should be applied unto for a gift of the stipend of the said united parishes for the cropt and year 1701 (the stipend 1700 being his already) and Lykeways that the stipends of the

united parishes where he formerly served, should be burdened with an hundred pounds Scots yearly to be payed to him during his lifetime, and that a letter be written to the Presbytery of Zetland thereanent, And the said Commission having considered the report above written, They did hereby and do approve thereof, And appoints and recommends according thereto. And recommends to Mr Thomas Wilkie, moderator, Mr Patrick Cumming, and Mr David Williamson to speak to the Lords of Treasury according to the said report." Letter from the Commission of Assembly to the Presbytery of Zetland, dated 12th March 1701.

" Edinburgh 12th March 1701.

The General Assembly of the National Church after hearing your letter to them together with several references from the Commission sent you anent your affairs, as also having heard the efforts made upon your Presbytery register by those to whom the same was committed, they did approve of your register and appointed their Clerk to attest the same, and for your other affairs (excepting as to what concerned Mr Theodore Umphray, and Pa: Mowatt, of which you shall hear afterwards) they were wholly referred to the serious consideration of this Commission. In pursuance thereof this Commission have nominated and appointed two young probationers according to your desire to repair unto you this spring, both of whom as we judge fitt and worthie to be employed in the Lord's vineyard, whom we doubt not but you will encourage to that effect and if possible, will settle them in some of your vacancies upon loyal and orderlie calls, as we are informed you have done him whom the Assembly sent to you the last year, and till they be

settled you will take care that they be provided with suitable maintenance as far as the allowances appointed by Act of Parliament can contribute grants. The General Assembly received a (petition) given for Mr Theodore Umphray, and referred it to their Commission to think upon some way of subsistence to him and his poor numerous familie during his life, and they taking that affair into their serious consideration judged that without(doubt) the whole last year's stipend 1700 did legally belong to him, and that it would be past Whitsunday in this year before that charge would be declared vacant, but to secure this whole year's stipend to 1701 unto him they have appointed address to be made to the Lords of (Commission) for that effect, and that during his lifetime hereafter the stipend be burthened at 100 pounds Scotts yearlie to him and his poor familie to subsist upon, and that, should the kirk be vacant or planted, and it is hoped that the Presbyterie will(take steps) to that end."

" To the Right Reverend

The Moderator and Remnant Brethren of the
Commission of the Church of Scotland.

The address of Mr Theodore Umphray late

Minister of the United Churches of Nesting in Zetland

Humbly Showeth

That whereas at the last General Assembly of this Church I did demit the charge of these four united churches as not being longer able for the travel and fatigue of that charge now in my decaying age, yet I hope it will not be taken so as that I

resolved to be no more a Minister of the Gospel, for I show the Moderator and other Brethren of the Ministrie of (Zetland) before I went off that if the Assemblie and the Commission of the Kirk had not risen immediately after the discussing of my affair I had a mind to have put in to them that I might have been admitted to some more ease charge within the **countray** wherever I could have a call, for though I be farr on in years yet I bless God I have some ability yet both of body and mynd for the discharge of my doutie, and hope that merciful Lord who has called me to preach his Gospel, though unworthie, will not leave me in my old age nor put ane end to my days till my work be done for He knows best his works with me, and what work He hath yet for me to be done before I go hence and be no more here, and as for any scandell wherewith I was charged, there is nothing proven against me that can be laid hold on for my disadvantage by any person that is not possessed with prejudice and void of charitie, for I am exculpat by all the witnesses that have been had aither for me or aganst me, and therefor the scandell is taken away.

May it therefor please your godly wiadomes to whom my circumstances (as I suppose) are well enough known, to restore me the publique exercise of my ministeriall function within this countray, where I can have a charge that I am able for to manage, for there is nothing in this world that I desire so much as to live and dye in the service of that Lord to whom I once engaged myself, and that I may redeem the time and double my diligence for the edifying of the Church.

And your wisdomes favourable answer is expected to this my

humble petition, dated at Houlland in Nesting, July the 2, 1701, and subscribed with my hand as under.

Theodore Umphray."

Records of Commission of Assembly 1701-1702. page 40.

4th Sept. 1701.

"There being presented to the Commission a petition subscribed by Mr Theodore Umphray minister in Zetland, by Mr Charles Mitchell writer in Edinburgh, commissionate to that effect, craving to be received to the publick exercise of his ministerial function in that countrey, the same being read, the Commission remit to Mr George Meldrum, Mr Patrick Cuming, Mr James Ramsay at Eyemouth, nominate to consider anent Zetland, to consider this petition at 4 o'clock in Mr George Meldrum's chamber, and it is lykeways remitted to the same Committee to consider what is furdur necessary to be done by the Commission with reference to Lerwick in Zetland."

4th Sept. 1701.

"The Committee nominate for the affairs of Zetland to consider the petition of Mr Theodore Umphray having brought in their report, the samen was read and hereby unanimously agreed to and approven by the Commission whereof the tenor followes, viz: the Committee of the Commission nominate to consider the petition of Mr Theodore Umphray, and other affairs concerning Zetland, being met and having discussed thereanent, and finding as to Mr Theodore Umphray that by his own demission given in to the General Assembly he declares in express words that being sensible that by reason of a process led against him he could not be so useful

in the ministry in that countrey as is requisite, Upon that and upon many other accounts, the said Committee are of opinion that the desire of his petition craving to be received into, ministerial communion cannot be granted, And that a letter be written to the Presbytery of Zetland, giving an account of his position, and the Commissioners' deliverance thereon, And that it was surprising to them to understand by his letter to Charles Mitchell, wryter here, that he had received a call from a paroch in their bounds, and that the Commission were confident none of the said Presbytery had any hand therein, And that for the future they be careful not to concur in any call to him, or any in his circumstances, That it was out of pity to him and his family that the General Assembly accepted his demission, and did not proceed to examine and advise process against him in order to his deposition, and he having declared that he was resolved to go out of the Kingdom, the General Assembly did forbear to proceed any farder against him at that time, but seeing he has taken this course it was the Committee's opinion that the Presbyterie should be required to take special notice of his carriage, and if he walk any more irregularly or carry indiscreetly to the Presbyterie, or any member thereof, they proceed to censure him and give ane account to the Commission of the General Assembly of their diligence therein, and in order thereunto record the said letter in their books and send in the same to the General Assembly next ensuing that they may the better thereby know whether it will be necessary to send another Commission to visit the said bounds."

Letter from the Commission of Assembly to the Presbytery
of Zetland, 4th Sept 1701.

"There was presented to the Commission of the General Assembly at Edinburgh their quarterly meeting in September a petition for Mr Theodore Umphray lately minister at Nesting, craving to be restored to the public exercise of his ministerial functions in your countrey, with which petition they were surprised, seeing by his demission fully (subscribed) with his own hand and before famous witnesses, which he gave in to the late General Assembly, lying in our clerk's hands he declared in express words that being sensible of a process raised against him in Zetland, he would not be so useful in the ministry as is requisite. And they were the more yet surprised to understand by his letter to Charles Mitchell that he had received a call from a parish in your bounds, but were confident that you had no hand therein, and desyres that for the future you will be careful not to concur in any by him, or any in his circumstances. For it was out of pity to him and his family that the late General Assembly accepted of his demission and did not proceed to examine and advyse the process against him in order to his deposition. But he declared he was resolved to have gone out of the Kingdome and going he hath returned to your country and offered to (accept) a call notwithstanding all that was (testified) against him. The Commission of the General Assembly have unanimously refused his petition, and did and do hereby require you to take special notice of his carriage, and if he walk any way irregularly or carry indiscreetly towards you or any of your ministers as

formerly he did, you are to proceed to confute him as he deserveth, and give an account to the Commission or General Assembly of your diligence. And in order thereunto you are to record this letter, and send up your book to the next General Assembly that they may hereby know whether it be necessary to send up another commission to visit your bounds next year.

The Commission of the General Assembly does not doubt that you will give all due encouragement to Mr George Duncan and Mr John Cuming, and that you will do your endeavours to have them timeously settled among you, and it is expected that you who have friends and relations in the countrey will be kind to such as the superior Judicatories send to you, specially strangers who are far from their relations, friends and acquaintances.

The process anent Mr John Sandilands transportation is not as yet through, the region is not legally settled tho all be done for it, and for its commendations thereanent to the King here by the Commission of Parliament and General Assembly, so that we hope it will be granted."

1.

Unprinted Manuscript Sources.

1. Accounts of the Collector General of Thirds. 1578, 1595.
Register House, Edinburgh.
2. Documents relating to the call of Rev. John Sandilands of
Dolphington to Lerwick. Library of the Church of Scotland,
Edinburgh.
3. Documents relating to the case of Rev. Theodore Umphray of
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